GEC Process Review Report

Evaluation Manager Girls' Education Challenge Fund

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Ben Ward, Project Director

Signature:

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AGAs	Accountable Grant Arrangements
AUSAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DFID	Department for International Development
EM	Evaluation Manager
FAQs	Frequently Asked Questions
FM	Fund Manager
GEC	Girls' Education Challenge
GEMS	Girls Educational and Monitoring Services
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IW	Innovation Window
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PbR	Payment by Results
PwC	Pricewaterhouse Coopers
SCW	Step Change Window
SPW	Strategic Partnerships Window
ToC	Theory of Change
UK	United Kingdom
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VfM	Value for Money
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas

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Executive Summary

Introduction

In 2011, the Department for International Development (DFID) launched the £355 million Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) Fund. The GEC started on 23 September 2011 following approval of its Business Case. It set an ambitious target of reaching one million marginalised girls by the end of the first phase (31 March 2017).[1] The Business Case[2] for the GEC recognised that there was a lack of robust evidence about the benefits of focusing on girls' education. At the time, DFID, other donors and policy-makers didn't know enough about how and why girls were marginalised in terms of their education and how best to intervene to bring about significant changes in the lives of these girls. This was the underlying rationale for a fund that challenged the market to identify the causes of educational marginalisation, propose effective strategies for improving education outcomes for girls and rigorously collect evidence to prove and explain what worked well, why, for whom and under what types of circumstances.

The GEC has evolved over its life to date. It had to evolve and adapt quickly to design a programme capable of delivering its ambitious target of reaching one million marginalised girls within a relatively short timeframe. The purpose of this process review is to learn lessons from the start of the GEC up until the end of the baseline phases for each of the windows. These were staggered, ending with the Strategic Partnerships Window baseline phase that completed in March 2015.

It was intended that the lessons learned from this review should focus on specific areas of the GEC that would help DFID and other policy-makers to design and develop similar programmes in the future. For this purpose the process review focused on the:

- challenge fund design;
- monitoring and evaluation (M&E) requirements; and
- payment by results (PbR) mechanism.

The process review has been informed by an extensive document review and qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews with different sets of stakeholders involved in the GEC. The information and feedback we gathered was used to answer key research questions that were agreed with DFID at the start. We triangulated our analysis to ensure that our findings were generally representative of the performance of during the early stage of the GEC delivery process. We recognise that some of the lessons learned captured in this report may have been addressed through changes later on the delivery process.

While the review was structured by these focus areas, we found considerable overlap between them. Each of these focus areas are sometimes directly and indirectly affected by each other – for example, the inherent links between PbR and M&E. For the sake of clarity and to avoid repetition, our conclusions are structured by the focus areas of the review. However, we have tried to capture within each set of conclusions what has worked well, what was found to be a challenge at the start but was addressed over time, and aspects of the delivery process that remain a challenge and should be addressed in future programmes.

Key conclusions

Central management of the GEC through a Fund Manager was more effective than other options.

The GEC benefited from central management through a consistent set of processes for applications, guidance and decisions made around issues including financial reporting, M&E requirements and PbR guidance. DFID did not have the capacity, in terms of staff, level of flexibility or in-house technical expertise to manage a programme the size and complexity of the GEC. By using a Fund Manager, a relatively small team within DFID has been able to have greater oversight and focus on the strategic vision for the GEC as it progresses. Beyond these efficiencies, central management enabled a consistent approach to performance measurement, lesson learning and to making comparisons at a global level.

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[1] Girls' Education Challenge: http://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-202372 /
[2] GEC Business Case v.3, September 2011

More could have been done to regularly involve DFID country offices to leverage their local knowledge and resources.

When DFID country offices effectively engaged with the GEC they were able to add value by practically assisting the design and delivery process, and by using their valuable contextual, policy and programmatic country knowledge. But, because the GEC did not resource its programme through DFID country offices, its ability to leverage the knowledge and resources of these country offices was inconsistent and limited, particularly for SCW and IW projects. There was no formal communication between projects and in-country DFID country offices, and some projects noted this disconnect and the lack of in-country support. One consequence was that projects mentioned overlaps between the GEC and other DFID projects in-country that were only discovered later on in the process.

The addition of the FM's Country Monitors helped projects and enhanced DFID country offices' involvement in the GEC.

At the start of the programme, in-country support from the FM was limited during the project design and baseline stages for the IW and SCW. The FM did not have the time, capacity or budget in the early stages of the GEC to be available in-country. But over time, the introduction of Country Monitors and the adoption of a more regional management structure helped address the lack of in-country support that GEC projects felt they were missing. This may also have improved the regularity of DFID in-country offices' involvement in the programme.

A programme inception phase to design and set up the GEC was critical.

It is difficult to articulate how different parts of a complex programme like the GEC depend on one another. But it was clear throughout this review that a lack of time at the start of the programme to design and set up the GEC affected many different parts of the delivery process that followed. The FM was contracted less than two weeks before the launch of the first and largest window, the SCW. There was no time to discuss and agree definitions and methodologies for PbR, think through and develop M&E requirements, and communicate these requirements to potential grantees at the application stage. This resulted in confusion for applicants and grantees from the start that had knock-on effects throughout the commissioning and baseline process. Once the SCW and IW were launched, DFID, the FM and the EM had to catch up with the commissioning process, which led to some delays and frustration for projects.

An inception phase for IW projects provided an opportunity to proactively support the project design process and provided DFID with leverage to ensure compliance with GEC requirements.

The decision that IW projects should have an inception phase is a good example of adaptive management in the GEC. Although the GEC did not initially envision project inception phases for either SCW or IW projects, DFID and the FM later decided to include an inception phase for IW projects. The inclusion of an inception phase gave projects time to develop their designs and M&E frameworks and develop stronger relationships with the FM. Despite this, some projects felt that there was too much focus on developing M&E frameworks, which meant they couldn't spend as much time as they wanted developing their project designs.

This two-stage approach to contracting in the IW gave DFID and the FM leverage over the quality of the project designs that several respondents felt they did not have with SCW projects who were contracted from the start. They explained that some of the SCW projects resisted changing their project designs in response to their baseline findings and new information about PbR requirements. This might have been overcome through clearer guidance about these requirements earlier on in the process and by adopting a similar approach to the IW that allowed more time for projects to absorb what they learned and adapt their designs.

The GEC succeeded in including private sector partners in its portfolio by using a different approach that was better suited to working with the private sector.

The FM's approach to the SPW led to different types of public-private partnerships that are focused on delivering development outcomes. These are an innovative feature of the GEC. By working with different private sector organisations from very early on in the commissioning process, the FM was in a unique position to provide advice and support to bring organisations with complementary offerings together. The private sector has different ways of working to the public sector and tended to view DFID's approaches as overly structured, inflexible and overly burdensome. The FM acknowledged that the tools used for INGOs were not appropriate for the private sector and over time adapted them to allow a more pragmatic approach to working with the private sector partners.

The GEC has targeted marginalised girls, some are extremely marginalised, but the ‘most’ marginalised have not systematically been reached across the GEC.

The DFID Business Case defined marginalised as “those girls of primary and secondary school age (approximate age range of 6-19) who have not been enrolled or have dropped out from school (whether living in slums, remote areas, ethnic minorities, girls with disabilities etc.) or are in danger of doing so.” Marginalisation was defined in terms of the education outcomes that DFID wanted the GEC to focus on.

At the start of the GEC, DFID decided not to prescribe the type of factors or underlying causes that marginalised girls from education. This was appropriate because there was a lack of evidence about what caused girls’ marginalisation and it was clear that the factors driving complex problems would vary from one context to another. For this reason, applicants were required to explain how and why the girls they were targeting were marginalised from education. While it is clear that many of the girls targeted by GEC projects are marginalised – extremely marginalised in some places (e.g. Afghanistan) – girls targeted across the GEC are not systematically the most marginalised. If the intention is to systematically target the most marginalised girls through project targeting strategies and designs then this should be a more explicit programme focus in the future. However, it should be noted that the EM’s Baseline Reports for the SCW and IW concluded that many projects had not sufficiently identified the links between factors that marginalised girls, such as disability or poverty, and specifically how and to what extent these impact on girls’ education.

The target of reaching one million girls and a focus on low unit costs per beneficiary initially drove the selection process to value quantity over the degree of marginalisation targeted by projects.

An early policy commitment of the GEC was to reach one million girls. This affected the initial assessment and selection process, especially with the early introduction of a cost per beneficiary metric. Particularly for the SCW, this led to a tendency during the selection process to value quantity over quality in terms of the type of groups that were reached and the degree to which they were marginalised from education. However, after initial selection more consideration was given to the degree of marginalisation compared to the scale of the numbers reached. It is understandable that a results-driven programme like the GEC that is seeking to have a significant impact on marginalised girls would focus on the scale of its reach. But with the growing evidence that the GEC is now gathering about the nature and scale of marginalisation that girls face across different contexts, there is an opportunity to develop targeting strategies that are more context-specific, more nuanced and still able to achieve best value for money.

Robust M&E is achievable in complex, multi-country development programmes, given adequate resources, planning and management.

The GEC accomplished its objective of embedding robust M&E in a complex, multi-country, multi-window programme. Although there were issues with timing and sequencing, the FM and EM provided substantial guidance and one-to-one remote and face-to-face support for all projects. As a direct result all projects produced M&E frameworks that met project standards and provided a consistent means of measuring project level outcomes. The rigour and comparability of data collected at baseline will enable the GEC to assess whether projects are beginning to have an impact at midline, as well as providing robust evidence to inform decisions made under PbR.

Respondents from DFID, FM, EM, and projects noted that projects’ capacity to meet the GEC’s M&E requirements had increased. Several SCW projects mentioned seeing the rigour required from the GEC evaluation as a learning exercise. Other project respondents mentioned that their organisational capacity had developed because of the GEC through their staff and M&E tools they had used, including education monitoring tools, beneficiary tracking databases, and child protection policies. One IW grantee said that the “FM and EM should be proud of the wider knock on effect. It’s not limited to M&E also financial measures and child protection. We now use child protection policy in other country offices.”

But the M&E capacity of projects was generally lower than expected, and the level of one-to-one support, including in-country field visits, was greater than originally envisioned. The ability of grantees to analyse and effectively use the vast amounts of data collected in refining their initial theories of change and their logframe indicators was limited. For some projects the capacity building benefits have been diluted where the development of M&E frameworks was outsourced to external organisations.

PbR drives a coherent and consistent approach to delivering the type of results that DFID wanted to achieve through the GEC.

PbR drives coherence and consistency across projects subject to PbR because it unites organisations in achieving a common goal, which in the GEC is improved learning. It also ensures a consistent approach to measuring improvements in outcomes. Interview respondents indicated that PbR drove greater accountability because it shared the risk of not delivering results between projects and DFID because payment was conditional on achieving set targets. Several DFID and FM respondents noted that when the GEC started, DFID did not initially understand the implications of PbR and the rigorous M&E system needed to underpin it. Now, some actors inside and outside of DFID, see the GEC as a leading programme in the use of PbR and M&E.

The understanding of PbR in the GEC and the level of rigour in the measurement required increased gradually and requirements were adapted iteratively.

PbR was mentioned in all guidance provided to applicants at the concept note and the full applications stage. However, the understanding of what PbR intended to achieve and how it should be applied and assessed evolved over time. The FM made changes to PbR as it researched and developed its own tools for management, monitoring, and evaluation and as projects provided feedback. This was particularly evident in the way that learning targets were set and when attendance was removed as an outcome indicator for PbR. As mentioned earlier, there was a lack of time to develop the processes and tools required to set up PbR properly from the very start. The approach and guidance that was eventually developed needed to be communicated as early as possible in the commissioning and design process. This would have allowed applicants to fully consider the implications of compliance with the PbR requirements for their project designs and their management plans. Applicants needed more time to make informed decisions about whether they wanted to apply for funding given the PbR requirements and what type of proposals they wanted to submit and develop.

PbR may not be universally appropriate for all types of projects, organisations and contexts.

PbR works by stretching projects to deliver better results if, very early on, they fully understand the purpose of PbR as a performance management mechanism, how the PbR mechanism works in practice and are aware of the potentially positive and negative implications. However, PbR acted as a disincentive for innovation. IW projects explained that while their projects had innovative elements incorporated into their project design, the GEC's focus on specific educational outcomes, the number of girls reached and a focus on PbR did not provide them with enough incentive to innovate. For some projects, the reward system of PbR may not necessarily align with the incentive mechanisms of not-for-profit organisations. During implementation, projects working in fragile contexts were granted exemption from the requirement for PbR and the need for a counterfactual evaluation design with control groups. This was based on the FM's recommendation as a result of projects' concerns about ethical, security and practical challenges of the PbR requirements such as the use of control groups in high risk and fragile environments.

Recommendations

The recommendations arising from the process review are mainly for DFID and are intended to inform similar programmes in the future.

DFID

- **Central management of a complex, multi-country, multi-window challenge fund like the GEC is effective at achieving a consistent approach across a global programme. But global programmes should ensure that linkages with DFID country offices and support through mechanisms such as Country Monitors are built into the programme design from the start.** Programmes that operate globally should ensure DFID country offices are involved at all stages of the programme. DFID country education advisers (where available) offer contextual understanding, in-country relationships and technical expertise. Establishing and facilitating official lines of communication between DFID country education advisers /offices and the FM, EM and projects would enable these to be leveraged.

- **Future similar programmes should include an inception phase. This should allow enough time for DFID, the FM and EM to design and set up the approach to programme and performance management, including PbR and M&E and to develop the tools and guidance required.** An inception phase for DFID, the FM and EM to establish the project design process and programme systems should be included at the start of a challenge fund. If an EM is to be contracted, their contract and inception phase should start at the same time as the FM to allow complementary design of the programme, evaluation strategy, M&E framework /guidance and programme performance indicators.
- **An inception phase should be included for grantees to allow enough time for them to review and revise their theories of change and adapt their project designs.** An inception phase for planning, design and capacity building should be included for all projects in a challenge fund. This period of time allows projects to collect and analyse baseline data to test their theories of change and underlying assumptions, and adapt their project designs and budgets as required. The inception phase also serves as a period for bridging gaps in capacity and ensuring that the project is compliant with the programme's requirements. An inception phase followed by a "go or no-go decision" for all projects should also be considered. It reduces the initial risk absorbed by DFID when contracting projects from the start for the whole project period.
- **Different types of funding windows should be used to support different strategic objectives. The way the windows are set up, designed and managed should be tailored to the distinct objectives for each window.** The lessons learned about what worked well with the SPW suggests that the design of funding windows and the way that they are expected to work should be driven by the type and scale of outcomes that DFID wants to achieve. Similarly, DFID's approach to innovation and the type and level of innovation it wants to incentivise and achieve through an innovation window should drive the approach to its design. DFID needs to consider the level of risk it is willing to accept. A less risk adverse approach would place less emphasis on results, a greater focus on testing the mechanism of change, and allow more room for failure. This would serve to test and understand how and why innovative approaches succeed or fail.
- **A universal approach to targeting girls marginalised from education was appropriate at the start of the GEC. DFID now has a growing evidence base that it can use to target specific groups of girls who experience particular barriers to education or are marginalised from education at different stages in their life.** The global evidence base about girls' education and what marginalised them before the GEC was weak. We now know more about the extent to which girls are marginalised from education, why and how this happens under different types of contexts. This provides DFID with an opportunity to develop a segmented approach to targeting programme results that are more nuanced and better reflect the context-specific nature of different ways in which girls are marginalised at different stages in their lives and school experiences.
- **A rigorous approach to M&E can be achieved and is useful. But it needs to be appropriate to the strategic objectives of a particular funding window, the type of interventions and context in which projects are delivered.** Developing and implementing a rigorous approach to M&E is important and useful. But, the approach and the design of a project M&E framework should be appropriate for the type of intervention design and the context in which it is being delivered. This means that a universal (one size fits all) evaluation design should not necessarily be applied to all projects or windows because it may not always help deliver their objectives and may not be appropriate. The expectations and requirements for implementing a rigorous M&E approach should be clearly communicated at an early stage of the programme. This allows projects to plan and budget for their M&E appropriately and potentially avoid discouraging smaller organisations or organisations with particularly innovative, but riskier approaches.
- **Decisions about the use of PbR should be made early on in the process and its implementation should be tailored and adapted to the type of organisation, the project objectives and its context.** Policy decisions need to be made at the early stages of the programme design about whether PbR is to be applied, for what reasons, and under what programme conditions. PbR can incentivise grantees to stretch their performance to exceed their targets but it can also lead to risk adverse behaviour. PbR approaches need to be tailored to the design and delivery context for each project rather than universally applied to all projects in the same way. Developing and implementing PbR across a programme takes time. So its use should be considered from the outset and planned appropriately.

1 Introduction and Context

1.1 Background and purpose of this report

In 2011, the Department for International Development (DFID) launched the £355 million Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) Fund. The GEC intends to support up to a million of the world's marginalised girls to improve their lives through education. It started on 23 September 2011 and ends on 31 March 2017.[3]

DFID commissioned a consortium led by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) as the Fund Manager (FM) and a consortium led by Coffey as the independent Evaluation Manager (EM).

As the EM, we are responsible for designing and implementing a rigorous monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to assess the effectiveness and impact of individual projects and the GEC as a whole. We also produce and share lessons learned to inform the GEC design and wider DFID programming.

The purpose of this process review at the midline stage of the GEC is to help inform our fund-level analysis of the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the GEC programme, to promote accountability and to provide lesson learning about the GEC.

The process review covers the early stages of the delivery process from the start of the design of the GEC in September 2011 to the submission of all projects' baseline reports for each funding window. This period ended in March 2014 for the Step Change Window (SCW), April 2014 for the Innovation Window (IW) and March 2015 for the Strategic Partnership Window (SPW).

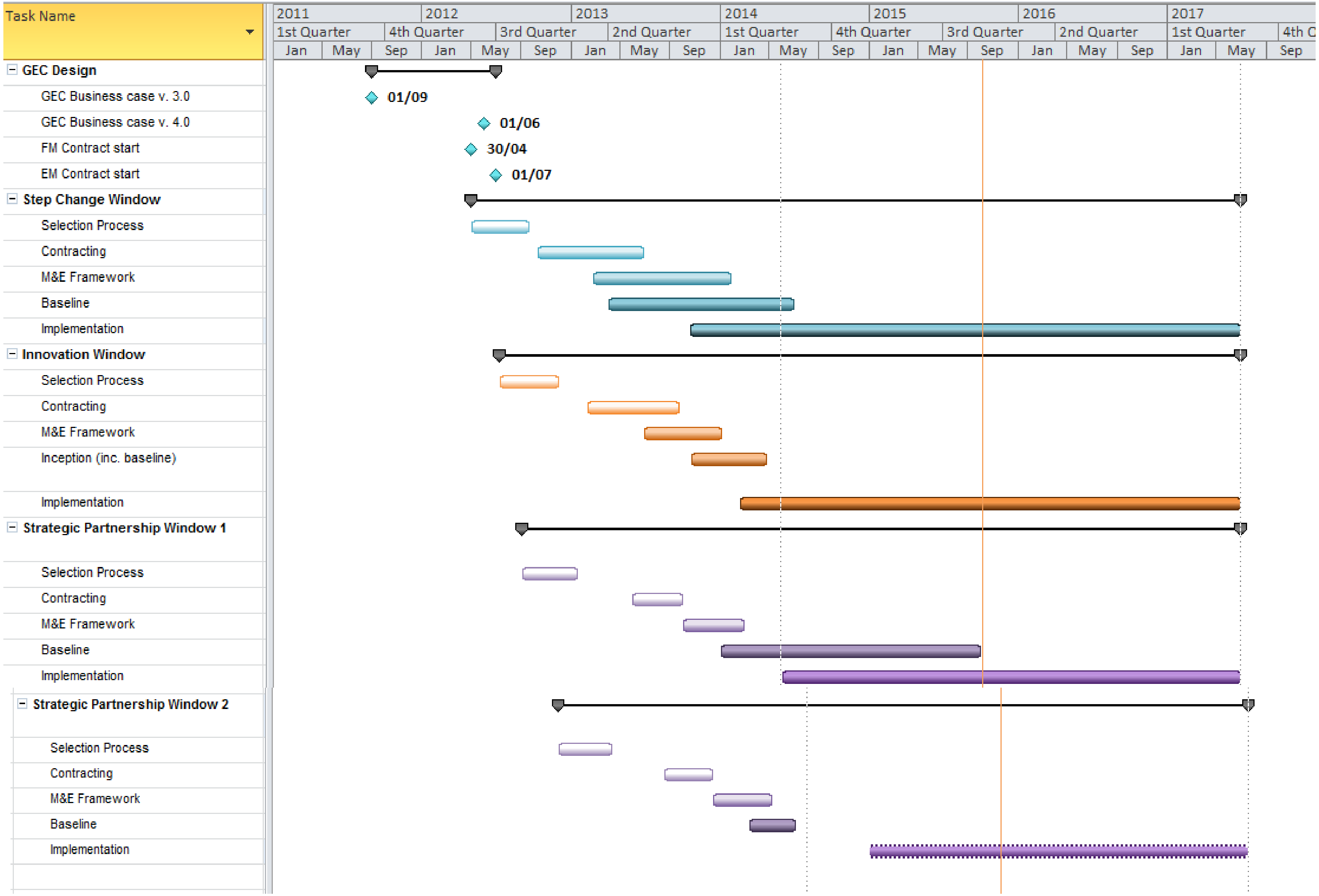
1.2 Objectives of the GEC process review

The findings from the process review will enable DFID, the GEC Steering Committee and other stakeholders to learn lessons about the design and management of the GEC to inform:

- potential improvements in the management and delivery of the GEC; and
- the development of similar programme approaches and wider DFID policy in the future.

[3] Girls' Education Challenge: http://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-202372 /

1.3 GEC timeline



2 Evaluation Framework

2.1 Research questions

The GEC is now at the midpoint of its implementation phase. As such, it is not possible to undertake an evaluation of all processes to determine if the programme was successfully designed and implemented. This process review, conducted between March and September 2015, covers the selection, inception and baseline periods of the GEC. The process review assesses three areas:

1. Challenge fund design;
2. Monitoring and evaluation requirements; and
3. Payment by Results (PbR).

These aspects of the GEC were identified by DFID, as distinct features of the GEC programme. For this reason, examining these areas provides a good opportunity both to identify ways to improve the delivery of the GEC and to inform the development of future programmes.

The process review was designed to answer the following questions that were agreed with DFID at the start:

Challenge fund design

- What were the advantages and disadvantages of the challenge fund?
- To what extent did the selection criteria for the SCW projects result in projects starting up quickly and how was this explained?
- What were the strengths and weaknesses of including an Inception Phase for IW projects?
- What lessons have been learnt from the negotiation and partnership approach to working with SPW partners?

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) requirements

- How have the requirements for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) affected grantees' capacity to produce rigorously designed, monitored, and evaluated projects?
- In what ways have M&E requirements had positive or negative impacts on grantees and the wider sector?

Payment by Results (PbR)

- How has Payment by Results (PbR) influenced project design?
- How has PbR improved value for money for the Step Change Window projects?
- How has PbR made IW projects more accountable?

3 Approach and Methodology

This section provides a description of the data sources and methodology that we used to develop the findings presented in this report.

3.1 Approach

We developed a research framework for the process review based on the selected research questions and the programme period covered by the review. Under each of the research questions, we identified the rationale and objective for each area assessed to understand how and why it was expected to work at the start.

To identify the rationale and objective for each part of the process, we conducted an initial review of background documents. Based on the rationale and objective for each process, we developed sub-questions that explored how the process was implemented in practice. These sub-questions informed our data collection methods, including the document review and interviews that we conducted.

Our process review research framework is in Annex A.

3.2 Methodology

For the process review, we conducted a document review and qualitative data collection through semi-structured interviews with different sets of stakeholders involved in the GEC to answer the research questions. We triangulated our analysis to produce findings that are reasonably generalisable about the GEC programme delivery process during its early stages.

3.2.1 Data collection

Document review

We conducted a preliminary document review to inform the development of the detailed process review framework and topic guides.

In the process review framework, we identified sub-questions that required further document review to triangulate evidence collected through primary data collection. We gathered documents from the FM, the EM and DFID.

We reviewed the GEC business case, DFID, FM, and EM guidance, project documents, meeting minutes and other programme documents. Where possible, we reviewed multiple iterations of documents to capture changes across the time period of the process review.

A full list of documents reviewed is in Annex D.

Interviews with stakeholders

Our detailed review framework sets out the information sought from each stakeholder. We developed tailored topic guides for each type of stakeholder identified: DFID, FM, EM, and projects from the three GEC project windows. Examples of these topic guides are provided in Annex C.

Our sampling methodology for interviewing projects was based on the funding window, region and whether the project operated in a conflict setting. We randomly sampled the projects within these groupings. Figure 2 shows our sampling frame for the projects selected.

Figure 2: Project sampling frame

Type of project	Total	Sample
Step Change Window	15	6
West Africa	2	2
East Africa	9	2
South Africa	1	1
Asia	3	1

Type of project	Total	Sample
Innovation Window	19	9
West Africa	1	1
East Africa	12	5
South Africa	3	2
Asia	3	1

Conflict affected countries		
Conflict setting	7	4
Non-conflict setting	30	16

Strategic Partnerships Window	4	2
All projects	**37**	**20**

From these projects, where possible, we interviewed in-country staff members who had been involved with the GEC for an extended period of time and had an understanding of PbR and M&E requirements for projects in the GEC. When in-country staff members were not available, we interviewed an alternative staff member with similar characteristics.

For stakeholders from DFID, the FM and the EM, we used a purposive sample. We sampled three individuals from DFID, eight from the FM and two from the EM. We selected these individuals based on their experience and the length of time that they were involved with the GEC during the time period explored in the process review. We did not interview any DFID country advisors. A list of interviewed individuals is in Annex E.

We conducted interviews in person where possible and by telephone or Skype when the interviewer and respondent were not based in the same city.

We sought permission to record each interview and transcribed the contents. To ensure the confidentiality of sources, interviewees are not referenced by name in the main report and not quoted directly. Some identifying information has been withheld.

Data analysis

Data collected from the document review and qualitative data from interviews were reviewed systematically and analysed using the review framework.

There is a risk that data collected, particularly through primary research, is biased to a particular viewpoint. This risk is increased because the EM is an organisation that has been involved in the delivery of the GEC from the start. To address possible bias, we triangulated our analysis by using at least three separate data sources before including a main finding in the report. Data sources include interviews and documents. In the event, that it was only one person's opinion, we clearly stated that there was only one source and as a result only captured their reflection of the process.

3.3 Research limitations and opportunities

The process review was largely conducted in accordance with the plan. But, there were some limitations inherent in the design and some research problems encountered which need to be taken into account when reviewing the findings.

- As the process review explored a time period from 2011 to 2014, it is possible that **key informants interviewed may not have accurately recalled the details of the process**. We reviewed documentation beforehand to be able to jog respondents' memories and have cross-checked respondents' recollections with different sources, including documents and other respondents, before including them in the report.

- **Key informants interviewed may not have been present or may not have been aware of decisions made during all phases explored in the process review**. We tried to identify and interview someone in-country from each project who had been involved with the GEC from the contract negotiation phase. Due to staff turnover and a lack of availability of interviewees this was not always possible. Also, key informants based in-country may not have been best placed to respond to questions about PbR and M&E. For many projects, decisions about both of these areas were mostly made at headquarters level. When possible, we interviewed additional staff members from a project to gather information about a specific area.
- In writing our report, we intended to portray a balanced picture of the process that captured both positives and negatives. We tried to avoid interview responses that were only focused on negatives by using a topic guide and a random sample of project respondents. However, individuals interviewed may have reflected and reported more on negative aspects of the GEC, which led to the report highlighting more challenges than successes.
- **Key informants may have provided biased responses because of a specific agenda /vested interest or due to the interviewer's affiliation with the EM**. Where possible, the EM matched interviewers with respondents with whom they had not routinely worked during the GEC. We triangulated findings using multiple primary and secondary data sources.
- **Document review was limited to the time and scope of the process review**. The EM worked closely with the FM to gather relevant documents. The FM was able to suggest documents that related to areas covered in the process review. In some cases, documents received were not the most up to date versions or did not include older versions that captured changes in the process. For example, iterations of project trackers only included information about projects that were still in the GEC portfolio. It did not include information about projects that were no longer in the GEC portfolio. Information about projects that used to be part of the GEC portfolio could have provided insights on why projects dropped out. When possible, we used different documents to triangulate our information.
- Our lessons learned are based on the strengths and weaknesses of processes within the time period of the process review. These may be different at other points in the programme's lifecycle, for example after the midline evaluation or at the end of a project's life. Some of the issues raised in the findings may have also been addressed since the period covered by this review.
- Within the time period explored through the process review, there is a level of overlap between changes to guidance on PbR and M&E, which made it difficult to identify where decisions and feedback were made due to PbR requirements as opposed to M&E requirements. This limitation is highlighted in the findings.

4 Findings

4.1 Design Features of the Fund

4.1.1 What were the advantages and disadvantages of using a challenge fund approach?

The expected advantages of funding the GEC as a centrally managed challenge fund were to provide opportunities for innovation, engagement with the corporate sector and to target the hardest to reach. The central management of funding enabled DFID to have a more strategic role while the FM focused on fund management. However, the FM's limited technical capacity in the early stages of the GEC was challenging for projects and for the effective operation of the challenge fund. The limited engagement of DFID country offices has also been a disadvantage of a centrally funded challenge fund, as it has not enabled the GEC to leverage the knowledge and resources of these country offices.

In the GEC Business Case, DFID identified a competitive challenge fund as the most effective way to reach marginalised girls who were not benefiting from existing bilateral and multilateral funding. [4] Specific benefits of a challenge fund approach identified in the GEC appraisal case included providing an **opportunity for innovation, engagement with the corporate sector** and **targeting the hardest to reach**.[5]

We explored the advantages and disadvantages of using a challenge fund approach in the GEC.

Projects have not systematically reached the most marginalised girls.

The GEC business case defined the target group i.e. "the most marginalised girls", as girls between the ages of six to nineteen, who have not been enrolled or have dropped out from school or are in danger of doing so. This definition left open the social characteristics that caused educational marginalisation and any reference to their level of education.

The FM formally communicated this definition of marginalisation to applicants and included it in the guidance materials that were shared with all applicants. The FM discussed contextual factors for marginalisation during extensive moderation sessions that led to the final recommendations to DFID. However, projects were not required to identify target groups that were the most marginalised. Across all windows, projects welcomed the openness of the definition[6] because it enabled them to select a contextually relevant definition. Most project staff did not report any challenges in reaching the GEC's target group as it was defined. Projects did not provide systematic evidence that they have targeted the most marginalised. For example, in defining marginalisation, some projects used a single criterion like income level to determine which girls to target. But, this simple definition does not provide evidence that a project's target group is the most marginalised in the community. In comparison, other projects used multiple criteria or an index to assess girls' level of marginalisation in a community. They used this data to identify the most marginalised girls by comparing them to other girls in the area. For some projects, this level of specificity created challenges because they were not able to identify a sample of the most marginalised girls in their target areas during their baseline research.

An FM staff member recalled the difficulties they had in comparing and selecting projects based on marginalisation because of the open nature of its definition.

Reaching one million marginalised girls was a higher priority than reaching the most marginalised girls.

From early on in the design phase, the GEC had a target of reaching one million marginalised girls together with a focus on achieving and documenting its results.[7] This target had been announced at a launch event, and one respondent explained that there was pressure from the Secretary of State to make sure the GEC reached one million girls.

[4] DFID Business Case v.3, September 2011
[5] DFID Business Case v.3, September 2011
[6] The definitions are described in Annex B.
[7] GEC Business Case v3. Sept 2011 p 10

Respondents explained that projects working with more marginalised groups like disabled girls tended to have smaller beneficiary numbers.

In reviewing full applications for the SCW and IW, one of the initial scoring criteria and indicators of Value for Money (VfM) was cost per beneficiary. This was calculated by dividing the total project amount by the number of marginalised girls directly reached. FM staff explained that projects who were targeting very hard to reach girls, such as out of school girls or disabled girls, had a higher cost per marginalised girl than other projects, which resulted in a lower VfM score. This made it difficult to select the project. However, some projects with a high cost-per-beneficiary did make it through the selection process. These projects tended to be in Afghanistan or working with disabled girls. The FM needed to make sure the entire GEC portfolio reached one million girls. FM staff constantly tracked and tallied numbers to make sure that the final project designs would be able to reach one million girls. The relatively flexible definition of marginalisation and the priority of reaching one million girls moved the GEC away from one of the Business Case objectives of the challenge fund approach, which was to reach the 'most' marginalised girls.

Less than 25 per cent of partners in the GEC portfolio are new partners to DFID.

DFID intended to engage new partners through a challenge fund approach to complement current support with non-traditional approaches. In the current GEC programme portfolio, nine out of thirty seven projects (24 per cent) are implemented by new partners to DFID. While the GEC did engage new partners, there was an opportunity to include more new partners.

The GEC Business Case highlighted that the GEC would bring in new partners through the IW and the SPW. At the concept note stage of the IW, 61 per cent of selected project applicants (lead organisations) had not previously received DFID funding. In the final IW portfolio five out of nineteen lead organisations (26 per cent) were a new partner to DFID.[8] Challenges in retaining new partners are further discussed below. In the SPW, all four contracted organisations are new partners to DFID.

The GEC attracted innovative projects, but the most innovative projects may no longer be part of the GEC.

None of the concept notes that received the five highest scores in the IW are still in the GEC Programme. Only four IW projects out of the top twenty highest scoring concept notes are still in the GEC Programme.[9] FM respondents stated that some of the most innovative projects came from India that in the end were disqualified because of changes to DFID's funding policy. Another FM respondent explained that innovative projects were risky and were rejected through the FM's due diligence process or at the final approval point by the Secretary of State. Issues about the balance between innovation and risk are described below.

Overall, the FM and DFID explained that the GEC projects offered innovative ideas in line with the definition of innovation communicated in the programme guidance.[10] The level of innovation was acceptable because they met the criteria that were set out. But, a few FM respondents thought that while projects met the innovation criteria provided, the majority of projects selected did not meet ambitious expectations for innovation because it was not "disruptive or systemic innovation that comes and changes something (the way girls learn)".[11] This perception of innovation in the current GEC portfolio may reflect comparisons with other project proposals that were not selected. However, as there was no guidance or criteria that encouraged projects to propose ambitious innovative elements, it is possible that projects responded by not submitting "disruptive innovative" proposals.

While the opportunity for innovation was a key advantage of funding through a challenge fund approach, it is not clear that the GEC programme portfolio has effectively maximised the opportunities for innovation.

The GEC balanced mitigating risk with sparking innovation.

DFID's appetite for risk was a key determinant in the level of innovation that would emerge out of the GEC delivery process. Even for the IW, which was envisioned to promote innovative approaches to education, some FM respondents felt that an ambitious level of innovation would have required the GEC to fund risky projects. But, given the scale of the investment in the GEC programme, respondents explained that DFID was expected to show results and could not risk losing money on projects that might fail to deliver results. Some of the top scoring ideas

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[8] New partners to DFID: GEMS, Red Een Kind, Viva, Eco-Fuel and Raising Voices
[9] IW PCN Moderation report
[10] Definitions of innovation are in Annex B.
[11] FM staff

at the concept note stage provided by private sector organisations that included interesting models, such as mobile schools, did not make the final selection of projects in the IW.

A few project staff members stated that a key barrier to a projects' ability to innovate were the financial accountability requirements of the GEC programme, which the FM had in place to mitigate against financial risk and in response to DFID's own requirements for accurate forecasting. Larger organisations in the IW explained that they worked closely with their international or headquarters teams to make sure they could meet the GEC requirements.

Staff members interviewed from IW projects explained that while their project had innovative designs incorporated into their project design, the GEC's focus on set educational outcomes and the number of girls reached did not provide them with enough incentive to innovate, because innovation would represent a risk to the project delivering on these outcomes.

The FM has explained that if there was a greater appetite for programmatic risk, other processes could have been used to manage risk and spark innovation.

The GEC has engaged the corporate sector on the GEC mainly through the SPW.

According to the GEC Business Case, an aim of the GEC was to engage the corporate sector. There are four corporate sector[12] partners in the SPW: Discovery Channel, Coca-Cola, Ericsson and Avanti. Coca-Cola also successfully attracted funding and a partnership with another corporate sector partner, MasterCard. The GEC has not attracted corporate sector organisations to date in other funding windows.

The IW was able to attract many private sector partners at the proposal stage. However, only five were selected at the concept note stage. In the GEC portfolio, there are two private sector organisations in the IW: GEMS[13] (IW) and Eco-fuel (IW). Other private sector partners may also be part of the GEC through partnerships with non-profit partners.

Demanding M&E and financial requirements may have deterred new partners or private sector partners.

All IW project staff clearly stated that the M&E and financial requirements were challenging for the organisation. Many also doubted that smaller organisations without external resources such as international staff would have been able to manage the requirements.

In the SPW, after workshops were held with prospective organisations to explain the GEC requirements, an FM respondent explained that some of the interested organisations realised they did not have the capacity, time or funds to be a part of the GEC.

The GEC was not initially effectively marketed towards private sector actors.

In the programme manual, the FM outlined channels to reach the private sector.[14] Yet, the approach did not attract many private sector organisations in the SPW during the first round of funding. In the second round of funding for the SPW, the FM changed its marketing approach by including more national business networks, altering the criteria and extending the application window by two weeks. Members of the FM staff explained that it was difficult to reach potential private sector partners because of a misalignment between DFID's interest in working with the private sector and the private sector's interest in having a sound business case to support interventions. Respondents described the private sector partners' programmes as being driven by corporate social responsibility (CSR) rather than the need to find a sustainable business model. However, the FM has explained that the market response included a range of CSR and core business initiatives.

An FM staff member explained that for private sector partners, business modelling would have been needed to appeal to the private sector from a revenue generation and sustainability perspective. PbR was not included in the SPW, because partner organisations were providing match-funding. But, respondents explained that actually a form of payment by results may have been appropriate for private sector actors typically focused on their bottom-line. Further challenges with attracting and retaining private sector partners for the SPW are discussed in Section 5.1.4.

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[12] We have defined organisations in the corporate sector as multi-national private companies with publically traded stock. Private sector organisations are private companies who do not trade their shares publically.
[13] Since the period reviewed in the process review, GEMS has registered as the Varkey Foundation and is no longer a private sector organisation.
[14] GEC BAU Programme Manual March 2015.

Central management of the GEC through a FM was more effective than other options, but projects would have preferred to have a direct relationship with DFID.

The GEC is centrally managed by a FM to allow DFID to focus more on the strategic vision and oversight of the GEC.[15] DFID also did not have the capacity, including staff, level of flexibility or in-house technical expertise to manage a programme the size of the GEC. Several project staff members interviewed expressed discontent with the use of a Fund Manager. Projects consistently mentioned that the stream of communication from projects to the FM to DFID and back could be lengthy – especially during review stages of key documents in the IW inception phase when decisions took a long time. This further reinforced projects' sentiments that the FM acted as "a middle man between projects and DFID". This is a consistent with feedback from the Bond Survey conducted in 2014 where grantees across DFID-funded projects that involved Fund Managers reported concern that not having a direct relationship with DFID meant missing out on opportunities for learning and not knowing what the FM does or does not report to DFID.[16] Projects also felt that DFID had a better understanding of what was going on in the field than the FM, and were better placed to advise projects.

The FM did not operate effectively in the early stages of the GEC.

Without an inception phase or time to set up, the FM in the early months of the GEC had limited staff and could not operate at full capacity, especially in providing technical M&E and design support to projects. Several respondents from DFID and the majority of projects interviewed felt the FM initially did not have the technical expertise needed to fulfil the FM role during this time. Many projects put this down to PwC's auditing background, which meant they did not have the international development experience required and were too removed from the field. Projects also expressed frustration at the turnover rate on the GEC among the FM and EM teams. This meant repeating information and reporting to new people who in some cases provided different guidance.

There was an overall feeling from most project staff that the FM has become more flexible and understanding as it gained experience in its role. Most projects interviewed praised the FM for its flexibility in providing project extensions and re-profiling costs.

Central funding of the GEC led to knowledge, networks and experience from DFID country offices not always being leveraged.

Many stakeholders of the GEC saw central funding as a way to make sure there was a standard approach, lower transaction costs and an ability to compare performance across countries. DFID country office involvement was outlined in the GEC Business Case – during the proposal process in particular, DFID Education Officers in-country should have been provided with an opportunity to identify needs, highlight issues of saturation in particular areas and identify any issues with projects' target groups. The extent to which the involvement of DFID country staff during the proposal process was effective varied across countries – it depended on the relationship of the FM with the DFID country office and the capacity and level of engagement of the DFID country office. The FM has explained that they kept DFID country offices informed throughout the selection process and invited them to comment on applications. These comments held considerable weight during Steering Committee decision-making processes.

After the proposal stage, the relationship between FM staff and the DFID country offices depended more on individual relationships. For example, the FM would meet with DFID country officers when in-country. In some countries, tensions existed because GEC programming overlapped with bilateral programming. An FM staff member explained simply, "they don't have time set aside for GEC, not written into their job descriptions and you can't get a hold of them…they don't have the time or budget too and feel like the GEC is imposed on them".[17]

Use of GEC data at the country level to inform DFID country programming has been limited.

The use of GEC data at the country level to inform education programming or other DFID programming may not be taking place as there is a disconnect between DFID country offices and the work of the GEC. At the request of DFID UK, the EM did not have a direct relationship with any of the DFID country offices and all work with DFID was conducted centrally through DFID in the UK in the period reviewed. The EM expressed that it would have liked support from DFID country offices, as they knew the country context. For example, in a couple of situations where DFID country offices offered support to obtain research permissions, it was very helpful. The GEC Business Case

[15] GEC DFID Business Case v3, September 2011
[16] Bond Survey of DFID Fund-Managed programmes, 2014.
[17] FM staff

stated that it expected that the GEC evaluation would be closely co-ordinated with DFID country programme evaluations. This coordination between the GEC evaluation and other country evaluations has not taken place to date.

In-country support from DFID and the FM was limited for GEC projects, which is a disadvantage of the central funding of GEC.

Central funding of the GEC meant DFID country offices were not required to work with GEC projects and did not have a formal line of communication to SCW or IW projects. If consulted by projects, DFID country officers were expected to raise any issues with DFID centrally instead of making decisions themselves. Several projects expressed that there was no connection between their work and the DFID country office, which they felt was a disadvantage during implementation. Some DFID country offices, including those in Nigeria and Afghanistan, did make an effort to engage with projects. A project in the SPW was appreciative of the support from the in-country DFID office and felt that it had really benefited from their expertise. This different perspective may stem from the design of the SPW. SPW projects had contact points at DFID country offices while the SCW and IW projects did not.

In-country support from the FM was also limited during the project design and baseline stages for IW and SCW. The FM did not have the capacity or budget in the early stages of the GEC to be available in-country. In some instances, travel bans also prevented PwC from traveling to GEC countries. Projects have expressed that the addition of Country Monitors and the adoption of a more regional management structure has helped to alleviate some of these challenges faced in the early stages of the GEC.

Central management of the GEC has enabled global lesson learning.

Central management of the GEC ensured economies of scale in the production of guidance, development of tools, reporting and financial management. Beyond these efficiencies, central management allowed for lesson learning and comparison at a global scale. All 37 projects collected data consistently, according to GEC requirements, which can be used to provide lesson learning across countries.

4.1.2 To what extent did the selection criteria for the SCW projects result in projects starting up quickly and how was this explained?

SCW projects generally met the selection criteria. However, they were not able to start-up as quickly as had been expected. The expectation was that projects would have three months to set up their M&E framework, conduct baseline research, finalise their project design and then start implementation. In reality, the process took about a year. Contracting SCW projects and changing M&E and PbR requirements contributed to the delays during this period. Projects also took longer than expected to finalise their M&E framework and to design and carry out their baseline research.

SCW projects generally met the selection criteria but did not start implementation quickly.

The selection criteria for SCW projects were expected to produce a portfolio of large organisations with capacity to adapt already tested interventions and start implementation within four months of contracting. While the 15 organisations selected generally met the eligibility criteria, they were not able to start implementation quickly.

In the four months between contracting and the start of the implementation of their projects, the FM expected organisations to design their M&E framework, carry out their baseline research, submit their baseline report, finalise their project logframe and obtain approval to start implementation. Everything took much longer. For example, selected projects were notified in October 2012 and their contract negotiations lasted until July 2013.

The large-scale baseline research that was required to generate the necessary data and evidence took longer than the planned three month period, and was mainly caused by delays in developing, adapting, and revising projects' M&E frameworks and tools.

Further background information about the selection criteria and SCW timeline is provided in Annex B.

Developing and sharing guidance took longer than planned.

The FM was contracted less than two weeks before the launch of the first and largest window, the SCW. Additionally, the FM had no inception phase or time to develop a programme approach for the GEC. When the GEC was launched, the FM did not have clear processes and guidance in place for projects. As respondents noted, there was urgency within DFID to launch the GEC on a specific date. This gave the FM little time to fully develop its internal processes, to consult with DFID on programmatic issues, and produce detailed guidance.

The GEC intended to generate robust evidence using a cohesive approach to M&E and PbR across the programme portfolio. There were many technical approach and guidance documents that needed to be developed, but there was not enough time to produce these at the start of the programme.

As a result, the FM was delayed in communicating guidance to grantees. And, grantees did not receive all of the guidance at the same time. Instead, they received guidance gradually. For example, the FM shared the first handbook with guidance for specific M&E and PbR requirements in June 2013, when all SCW projects' contracts had been negotiated and signed between October 2012 and July 2013. All SCW respondents explained that while the guidance was helpful once they received it; its delay was a barrier to their progress.

The delayed provision of detailed guidance and ineffective communication to grantees contributed to delays in start of implementation.

FM guidance instructed projects not to start implementation of their projects until their M&E framework and logframe had been approved and they had carried out their baseline research. The delay in providing M&E guidance led to delays in approving projects' M&E frameworks and data collection tools. As new guidance was produced, projects had to make changes to their frameworks and their tools, and add elements to their baseline research. For example, some projects, after receiving feedback on their baseline data, undertook additional rounds of data collection fieldwork, made changes to data collection tools or made changes to targeting strategies based on the new guidance. Most respondents noted that the time to make the changes, and have them reviewed and approved by the FM was not initially expected and not accounted for in their planning. The FM also noted that, in many cases, projects started their baseline work without approval of their frameworks and tools by the FM.

Project respondents highlighted that there were delays in receiving guidance and feedback, but also delays due to lengthy approval periods. This is further discussed in Sections 4.2 and 4.3.

While projects found the support and guidance provided by the FM helpful and useful, they expressed frustration about the delays and various iterations of detailed guidance. Some FM respondents expressed that this frustration may stem from SCW organisations that are used to working with DFID being faced with new requirements from DFID which they did not expect or were used to. And while the selection of large organisations was expected to enable projects to start implementation quickly, it may have sometimes been a barrier to projects' ability to work flexibly and meet the requirements effectively.

The FM noted that the low capacity among projects and evaluators to develop rigorous M&E frameworks that fully met GEC requirements contributed to the delay in implementation. Low capacity to manage data collection may also have contributed to challenges and delays in the baseline research. This is further discussed in Section 5.2.2

4.1.3 What were the strengths and weaknesses of including an Inception Phase for IW projects?

The inception phase for IW projects provided time and support for organisations to further develop their project design and M&E. We found that organisations used the time to adapt their project design. However, M&E was the main focus and a time intensive activity during the inception phase. The inception phase also provided a way of mitigating risk against project failure for DFID and the FM. It was also a time for organisations to build relationships with the FM. Projects identified limited in-country support as a weakness of the inception phase.

An inception phase was not originally planned for IW projects. It was built into all IW projects in March 2013 during the contract negotiation process. The FM and DFID identified a need for a period to allow projects to further develop their project designs and their M&E frameworks and to conduct their baseline research, before starting to implement their activities. Respondents from the FM explained that the inception phase also became a period for the IW projects to demonstrate their capability to deliver their proposed projects to DFID and the FM.

We found the following strengths and weaknesses of the inception phase for IW projects.

The inception phase served as a risk mitigation mechanism for the FM.

Although it was not explicitly described in formal documentation about the inception phase, DFID, the EM and the FM all described the inception phase as a way to mitigate risk and an opportunity to learn more about the project before funding decisions were made by DFID. During the inception phase, DFID and the FM could see if the project had the capacity to deliver the work in line with the GEC requirements.

For the projects, it was an opportunity to build a relationship with the FM and to better understand the GEC's requirements. An IW project staff respondent explained that the inception phase was "a gift" and "strength" as they learned how the relationship would work and had support from the FM to adapt their project design based on the GEC's requirements.[18]

The inception phase created financial risks for projects.

While funding was available for the inception phase, projects felt restricted, as they did not know if they would receive full funding for implementation. This made inception a very uncertain period for them. For example, a project could hire staff, but only for six months. Also, if a project needed to make critical purchases for implementation, they could request approval from the FM if they could demonstrate they had necessary safeguards in place. But they were not able to make cost effective purchases. Both private sector partners in the IW (GEMS and Eco-Fuel) explained that this had implications for the design and delivery model of their projects – they were very vocal about the level of risk this posed to their organisations, which were trying new ideas, and if they had not received funding, all of the financial implications would have been borne by them.

Projects spent the majority of their inception phase improving their M&E frameworks with limited work on project design.

Although the inception phase was supposed to provide more time, resources and funding for projects to develop their project design, development of their M&E frameworks took a lot of time. Two milestones during this inception phase: (1) the approval of project M&E frameworks; and (2) the approval of the baseline study reports acted as gate keepers for IW projects – especially as both of these documents went through rigorous rounds of review by the FM and EM. Applicants explained that there was limited time to focus on project design or field consultations with stakeholders, because they had to focus on their M&E frameworks and baseline studies to gain approval to proceed to implementation.

Organisations adapted their project designs during the inception phase, but not usually as a result of baseline findings.

The Evaluation Manager's IW baseline report summarises the changes that were made to project designs including the identification of their target groups. However, projects and the FM explained that learning from their baseline studies was limited. A couple of projects explained that it was due to the timing of the inception phase. It did not provide sufficient time after the baseline research to review and revise their project designs. An FM respondent felt that the IW projects did not understand how to use their baseline research to inform their project designs. Building the capacity of organisations to use learning from the baseline research was not a focus of the M&E technical support provided during the inception phase.

The inception phase was demanding for organisations with limited capacity, which had to meet M&E requirements in a short time frame.

All projects described the highly intensive nature of the inception phase, which often related to the M&E requirements and processes. M&E was a focus of the inception phase due to the quality of the M&E in applications, which both EM and FM staff described as poor.[19] For a couple of IW projects, it was their first time undertaking M&E. For other projects, it was their first time experiencing such rigorous M&E requirements. Many organisations did not have the capacity to understand and meet these requirements. This is further discussed in Section 5.2.1. Two respondents questioned the proportionality of time and funding for M&E support in this phase.[20]

The inception phase strengthened the quality of baseline research for IW projects.

The EM found the inception phase to be important for making sure projects had the capacity and tools to design and conduct high quality research for impact evaluation. All project respondents noted the focus of the inception phase on improving the design of their M&E. Stakeholders across DFID, the FM and the EM have recognised that a similar period in the SCW could have provided better M&E frameworks, baseline data, analysis and baseline reports for SCW projects. An FM respondent explained that by providing the IW projects with the time and support

[18] IW project staff
[19] IW Handbook draft RA comments EM 20130311;
[20] DFID staff, FM staff

to develop their M&E frameworks, it made sure that projects understood the requirements and did not waste their effort.[21] A majority of projects interviewed spoke positively about the in-person EM support during the inception phase. They found it responsive to their needs and allowed them to better understand the GEC's M&E requirements.

The FM and DFID provided limited in-country support during the inception phase.

While projects received programme manuals and remote support from the FM, many projects expressed that it would have been very helpful to have someone based in-country who could respond to their needs and questions. The FM staff visited applicants in the inception phase in only a couple of cases due to budget and capacity constraints. The FM had a pool of technical consultants who supported the development and review of project M&E frameworks and other design documents. However, they only provided a very limited amount of in-country support. As previously mentioned, DFID country offices were not required to work with GEC projects and did not have a formal line of communication to IW projects. Several projects commented that there was no connection between their work and the DFID country office.

Communication and guidance were not always clear to projects.

The majority of projects explained that communication during this phase was often delayed and complicated by the number of stakeholders involved in reviewing each document. Projects also described the handbook guidance as being very lengthy and difficult to understand. This was another reason for wanting more in-country support.

4.1.4 What lessons have been learnt from the negotiation and partnership approach to working with SPW partners?

The FM's engineering of consortiums in the SPW led to unlikely partnerships that are an innovative feature of the GEC.

By working with different private sector organisations in the SPW funding rounds, the FM was in a unique position to provide advice and support to bring organisations with complementary offerings together. Furthermore, some SPW partners were able to bring in additional private sector partners through their work in girls' education. For example, Coca-Cola secured funding from MasterCard in Nigeria to complement its work with out of school girls on the GEC.

Private sector organisations, DFID and the FM have different approaches to their work, which required time to adapt to each other to form partnerships on the GEC.

Private sector organisations in the SPW did not find that the GEC enabled them to be flexible with their approach. The FM had structures, including log frames and reporting requirements, in place to meet DFID's requirements and ensure accountability. While one SPW project saw the value of the structured approach and tools, it expressed difficulty in operating in a context where all work is planned with little or no room for flexibility, which can be restrictive. One SPW organisation explained that DFID contracts were complicated and they did not have the freedom it expected. For example, they were required to identify a lead partner, instead of working as a consortium as they would have preferred.

DFID was more involved in the design process in the SPW. But, their involvement has been inconsistent. One project found their relationship with DFID, both in the UK and in-country, to be supportive and enabling, and they were appreciative of all of the technical support. However, this view was not shared across all SPW projects.

The FM used a different approach to working with organisations in the SPW than in the SCW and IW. Then, they further adapted their approach to working with the SPW organisations based on lessons learned in the first round of funding.

Working with private sector partners may have required a different approach for M&E than other windows.

The GEC tried to ensure the same rules for M&E were applied to all projects across the programme, including in the SPW.

After the FM held workshops about the GEC requirements for the SPW, some interested partners withdrew their application because they felt that they did not have the capacity or time required.[22] This effectively provided a built-

[21] FM staff
[22] FM staff

in self-selection process. However, the FM also acknowledged that the tools used for INGOs were not appropriate for the private sector and over time, they adapted their approach to working with the private sector and became more pragmatic.[23] Contracting in the SPW was different than contracting in other windows, which led to changes in the approach including changes to the budget template, additional due diligence checks and further involvement of the DFID in-country offices. In the second round of funding, the FM provided more dedicated support for M&E to SPW partners, including a point of contact on the FM's M&E team. The FM also shared templates and guidance with SPW Lead Partners for their feedback before finalising the documents.

The SPW may not have had the right incentives to attract private sector partners.

The GEC has four new private sector organisations as lead partners. But some FM staff described many of the projects as corporate social responsibility (CSR), as opposed to innovative private sector programming. An identified benefit of the GEC for SPW partners was to "develop longer-term strategic partnerships that have potential to deliver transformative impacts beyond 2015". The FM tried to highlight the link between business and development. They provided guidance to potential SPW organisations, which included a toolkit on the concept of 'shared value' between the business and development case for engaging with the GEC.

However, an FM respondent and an SPW project respondent simply explained that private sector organisations are really focused on profit to ensure commercial sustainability.

Projects in the SPW are innovative, but do not always reach the "most marginalised girls."

The SPW projects have a very high cost per marginalised girl. These high costs are related to the ICT or models being piloted in the SPW.[24] Also, due to some of the projects' barriers to entry such as access to electricity, marginalised girls who are part of the target group in those areas may not be as marginalised as marginalised girls in the SCW or the IW. This balance between innovation and reaching marginalised girls was acknowledged by projects in SPW, FM staff and DFID.

4.1.5 Lessons learned about the Challenge Fund design

Funding of innovation needs to be considered in the context of the donor's appetite for risk.

While an aim of a challenge fund is to provide the opportunity for innovation, on a results-focused programme, a donor may not be willing to take risks on projects with innovative components or unproven ideas that might fail to deliver results. Understanding the donor's appetite for a risk in a challenge fund is critical, because it determines the level of innovation that can be included in the programme.

Involvement of DFID in-country staff is important at all stages of the programme, even for a centrally funded programme.

In working on a multi-country programme, even if the programme is centrally funded, DFID country officers can offer useful insights and provide additional support. Their involvement in the design and implementation of a programme at the country-level can also reduce potential overlap and improve synergies. On the GEC, when DFID country officers were more engaged with projects, the EM or the FM, their support added a lot of value. On the GEC, DFID country advisors offered: linkages with other DFID (bilateral) education programming; contextual understanding; identified issues about saturation in specific locations; and were able to leverage existing relationships with government.

In-country support is effective and key to centrally funded programmes.

When working with new organisations and projects in a centrally managed programme, in-country support is helpful because it provides an opportunity to clarify uncertainties and to quickly build an understanding of the requirements and expectations. The use of country monitors and a regional management structure can allow for more regular support from staff that understands the operating context of the project.

In international development programming, marketing and working with the private sector requires a different approach to working with INGOs.

If a programme intends to engage private sector organisations, it may need to adapt its approach to fit with the approaches to working, incentives and operating requirements of the private sector. Specifically, the private

[23] FM staff; Summary of changes to SP2 based on lessons learned from SP1 (November 2013)
[24] These costs are expected to be driven down over time after the GEC programme timeframe.

sector's focus on profit and commercial sustainability needs to be considered at the design stage. For SMEs, the funding models used for INGOs may need to be adapted to reduce the risk borne by projects. Donor's programming requirements may also need to be changed to reflect approaches preferred and used by the private sector.

4.2 M&E requirements

4.2.1 How have M&E requirements affected grantees' capacity to produce rigorously designed, monitored, and evaluated projects?

GEC stakeholders recognise that the M&E requirements for the GEC are rigorous. Projects from all windows benefited from one-to-one FM and EM support in order to get their M&E frameworks approved. As a result, nearly all projects showed substantial improvement in their M&E frameworks. However, this was not always a result of increased capacity within projects but sometimes because the M&E frameworks were outsourced to the independent evaluator or developed by the central M&E function of the organisation. Respondents from DFID, the FM, and EM believe that the level of rigour used in the GEC will or should be used in the future, but some projects have questioned the relevance of M&E capacity building if other donors require less rigorous M&E.

GEC stakeholders recognise that the M&E requirements for the GEC are rigorous.

Nearly all respondents, including those from DFID, the FM, the EM, and the projects, viewed the GEC as having robust and rigorous M&E requirements. Some SCW projects noted that the M&E requirements on the GEC are more robust than what DFID had asked them to do previously. The rigorous M&E requirements met resistance from projects. The requirements posed technical challenges, and may not have always been in projects' best interests.

Nearly all projects across all windows benefited from M&E support.

All windows received M&E support in the form of detailed M&E guidance and direct technical advice given by both the FM and EM. Struggling SCW and IW projects received visits from FM technical consultants to help with technical aspects of their designs. All of the IW projects received up to five days of in-country support from the EM's evaluation consultants. The SPW projects benefited from several inception workshops, which explained the M&E requirements. They also received individual follow-ups from both FM and EM staff.

In the SCW, projects received technical support through one-to-one phone calls and struggling projects received additional support in the field. As the SCW did not have an inception phase, the FM and EM provided SCW projects with one-to-one support including M&E support during the contract negotiation phase. This was to help them develop their proposals to a position where DFID was comfortable contracting them. This support continued in the post-contract phase, and included reviews and feedback on projects' M&E frameworks. For projects that were struggling, the FM mobilised technical advisors to provide in-country support on issues including project M&E.

Due to the nature of the SCW organisations and the timeline of activities, pre-contract M&E discussions usually took place with the SCW projects' headquarters and frequently with managers and technical experts located in various places across the world, whereas post-contract discussions shifted to in-country project teams. The FM also mobilised a pool of technical consultants to travel to the field and help SCW projects with the technical aspects of their designs. At the time, providing in-country support to SCW projects was outside the EM's scope of work.

For the IW, projects received M&E support through a series of reviews of their M&E frameworks during the inception phase, as well as field visits to all projects by the EM. Some struggling projects received technical support visits by the FM. Several DFID and project respondents recognised the EM's IW project M&E visits as being particularly beneficial. A DFID respondent said they thought one of the best parts of this support was when EM consultants physically sat down with grantees to think through their theories of change. Some IW projects felt that the support offered was sufficient, and noted the availability of FM and EM advisors in addressing issues that arose. Projects appreciated the support available by Skype and phone from the FM.

Several SCW and IW projects noted that FM and EM guidance, when issued, was detailed and comprehensive.

For the SPW, DFID, the FM, and the EM were present at several inception workshops where they explained M&E requirements. FM and EM staff were available to follow up with SPW applicants on an individual basis. SPW projects appreciated the M&E support.

Project M&E frameworks generally showed substantial improvement from their initial submissions.

Respondents from DFID, the FM, EM, and projects noted that projects' capacity to meet the GEC M&E requirements had increased. An FM respondent also referenced FM Annual Reports which cited evidence from projects saying that their M&E capacity had improved.

Sometimes developments of parts of the M&E framework were outsourced, which limited M&E capacity building for projects.

One FM respondent noted that grantee capacity "wasn't built to the extent that it should or could have, because some got their external evaluators to do most of the work. Some organisations were very hands on with the evaluators and lots of back and forth, others just took whatever the evaluator produced and forwarded it to us."[25]

The quality of external evaluators appointed by projects varied, and some were not strong enough to produce outputs that met the level of quality required. Several SCW projects were unable to perform sample size calculations for example or draw their own samples despite dedicated support – these projects tended to rely on the EM to come up with their sample sizes and sampling frames.

Projects identified both positive and negative aspects to the GEC's M&E requirements and guidance.

Several SCW projects mentioned seeing the rigour required from the GEC evaluation as a learning exercise, and as increasing their proficiency with certain M&E techniques including randomised control trials, quasi-experimental methods, control and comparison groups, use of learning assessments, or use of spot checks. One SCW project also mentioned building the capacity of their consortium and partner organisations, and another mentioned that through the GEC they have developed education monitoring tools that they have used in other projects.

One IW project had previously "never had budget to do learning tests, cohort tracking or control groups. They were very excited about it and it was an investment in their data. They had never been able to show in a scientific way the impact of their projects. Those were all new areas." Another IW project appreciated FM guidance on financial management, technical support, and guidance around child protection and felt that this would have improved their organisation even if they did not receive the grant.

Several SCW and IW projects mentioned that the guidance offered was limited and that guidance, including webinars, came too late to be of much use. Projects did not always understand EM materials that were sent through, which were huge and detailed. According to one FM respondent, FM and EM support visits were instrumental in helping projects understand the requirements. The FM triaged their support to projects based on their capacity and ability to deliver data collection tools and collect data. The FM did not provide much assistance to the stronger projects and instead provided more support to smaller projects. SPW projects fed back that they gained a lot from this process. SPW projects were largely formed of consortiums, but conversations involved both lead partners and other consortium members.

Some projects questioned the relevance of M&E requirements.

Several respondents questioned whether the baseline process had the desired effect of informing project design or re-design. One FM respondent noted that the IW inception phase was meant to be a chance for projects to revise their designs but this didn't really happen because a lot of the focus was on delivering M&E frameworks and baseline studies in themselves. Some SCW and IW projects did mention that the baseline activity raised factors or issues of which they were not previously aware, but none of the projects interviewed mentioned that the baseline findings had substantially affected their project designs. The FM noted that one project had to move to a different location as the baseline findings indicated that girls were not especially marginalised in comparison to boys in the region they had originally chosen.

A FM respondent noted that SCW projects often used their baseline study as a means to justify their proposed approach rather than a needs assessment which could inform design changes if necessary. This respondent felt that this was partly because of the time invested in getting a concrete proposal before baseline, which organisations had put a lot of work into and felt like they had to justify it.

[25] FM staff

Several project respondents questioned whether other donors or other opportunities would require the level of rigour demanded by the GEC and whether any benefits gained from GEC capacity building would be of use.

The risks and resources associated with M&E should be weighed against the benefits.

M&E requirements underwent several adjustments to ensure that the GEC was taking a practical approach.

The baseline household survey developed by the EM took over three hours for enumerators to administer. It included a learning assessment, survey with the girl's primary caregiver and the girl herself at home and a follow up with the girl's teacher at school. SCW projects were required to adopt this household survey and IW projects were also encouraged to use it. Several SCW projects complained about the length and rigour of the baseline research, and suggested that it focus on fewer aspects. One FM respondent noted "incredible pushback from grantees on the household survey, which was one of the most robust surveys the respondent had seen." Although DFID had insisted on the use of control groups by all projects, this requirement was eventually removed for projects working in conflict affected environments. DFID eventually assessed the risks of requiring control groups in these areas as outweighing the benefit of a rigorous experimental approach to evaluation.

4.2.2 What was the starting point in terms of M&E capacity for SCW, IW, and SPW grantees?

Nearly all projects across all windows initially lacked capacity in M&E. The GEC team did not expect that most SCW projects would have such low M&E capacity, although they did anticipate limited capacity of SPW projects and very low capacity of IW projects.

DFID and the FM also initially had limited M&E capacity and this hindered this aspect of the programme's development early on in the delivery process. Several respondents mentioned that the low M&E capacity of external evaluators also hindered baseline data collection.

Nearly all projects across all windows initially lacked capacity for M&E.

To some extent, this was anticipated. An EM respondent noted that "there was full realisation that grantees themselves wouldn't be able to do it, and would struggle with capacity, which is why they were required to commission external expertise."[26] The EM also anticipated that projects might have limited internal capacity in M&E and in managing their external evaluators.

The FM generally recognised the low M&E capacity across all windows. One FM respondent that "nearly every organisation had to have careful and close handholding to get to the level they got to." Another FM respondent noted a general lack of understanding of the M&E requirements and statistical methods behind them. This was illustrated by projects attempting to come up with sample sizes and standardised deviations without realising that the calculations required them to first establish a target, and by one project operating in a conflict-affected environment signing up to 100 per cent PbR because they did not understand what they were getting themselves into.

Another FM respondent identified a misalignment in terms of the GEC M&E requirements and the technical skills available to the international development market – including among both implementing partners and external evaluators – at the time of contracting.

Projects' self-reported M&E capacity varied. Some projects reported having good central M&E resources that they were able to engage. Others had in-house M&E specialists or appointed M&E specialists or teams in the country. Some, however, struggled to find adequately skilled M&E specialists in the country they were working in.

The GEC team did not expect that most SCW projects would have such low M&E capacity.

The DFID GEC Business Case identified SCW projects as "organisations that will be ready to launch large scale projects quickly… ready to deliver at scale, typically based on proposals with strong evidence of quick and effective impact".[27] Requiring projects to produce strong evidence of their impact was based on the assumption that SCW projects already had the capacity to deliver this kind of evaluation evidence. This was one reason why SCW projects were approved after their Stage 2 application without an inception phase and additional time for M&E support and development.

[26] EM staff
[27] DFID GEC Business Case v3, September 2011.

DFID and FM respondents both said that with hindsight the GEC was wrong to assume that the SCW organisations had greater capacity in M&E than organisations in the other windows. Some of the SCW organisations did have a central M&E capacity, but it became clear that this resource was siloed and not necessarily available in equal measure to all country teams. This was most apparent in discrepancies in M&E capacity within the same organisations, which had two GEC projects with different teams in different countries (e.g. BRAC and VSO).

M&E capacity varied across SCW organisations, but stronger and weaker organisations did not necessarily meet prior expectations. One FM respondent noted:

> “Some organisations we thought would be able to do things for themselves couldn’t and vice versa. One applicant wasn’t known to DFID but they were consistently one of the top-scoring applications, and one of the fastest and higher quality baselines. Perhaps it wasn’t as hard for them as they hadn’t worked previously with DFID and just rolled up their sleeves and did it, they didn’t know any better. Another applicant had one of the lowest beneficiary costs but M&E requirements were so over and above anything that they had ever done before that it felt like we were speaking different languages.”

Several FM respondents noted that SCW organisations were bigger and more bureaucratic, and as a result, when designing their programmes could be more resistant to change. As one FM respondent explained, SCW organisations had models that were used in other countries, and would stick to them: “this is the way we do it and we’re not going to change it”.

Another FM respondent explained that the SCW organisations had put a lot of work into their Stage 1 applications and had their proposals accepted, rather than having an inception phase with a go/no-go decision like the IW where they still needed to demonstrate their abilities. Another FM respondent said that some SCW applicants felt threatened by GEC requirements because they were used to receiving DFID money without rigorous evaluations and this was the first time that the evaluations would generate statistically significant results of the effectiveness of their programmes.

SPW M&E capacity varied, but lessons learned from earlier windows strengthened the M&E support.

The assumption was that SPW partners would not be used to working with DFID and would need specific support in understanding the requirements. Given that the SPW partners sought included large and successful multinational companies, it was further assumed that many of these organisations had related capacity for M&E (tracking unit sales, profit/loss, and barriers for market entry) but were unfamiliar with terminology used by DFID, the development sector, and the public sector.

From the EM perspective, M&E understanding varied in the SPW. While some of the organisations understood the M&E language that was being used and the aims and objectives of an impact evaluation, other organisations which ended up dropping out were somewhat shocked at the level of rigour and found the approach foreign. From the FM perspective, initially SPW grantees did not see the value of rigorous M&E and wanted to move quickly into implementation. The FM put a lot of effort into trying to work on M&E logframes and to make sure that the project designs were adapted to reflect the findings of the baseline, more so than was invested in other windows.

The GEC anticipated low M&E capacity in IW projects and technical support was resourced accordingly.

Initially the GEC expected that many IW applicants would not have previously worked with DFID and therefore would not be familiar with DFID’s reporting requirements. In the end, this only applied to five lead partners. Whereas the SCW scoring criteria for the full application included an assessment of the strength of the analysis of evidence to support the proposed intervention, the IW scoring criteria asked only about what evidence was available to show that the project could work.[28] IW projects were not assumed to have the internal capacity to analyse evidence in support of their proposed intervention.

An EM respondent noted that because IW projects came from a social development background, they understood the M&E requirements but did not have or appreciate the capacity needed to respond to them. An FM respondent noted that IW projects lacked understanding of the M&E requirements and capacity for fulfilling them, and similar to the other windows appointed weak external evaluators.

Several FM respondents noted that, unlike SCW projects, IW projects were generally more open to learning and meeting the GEC requirements, and were easier to support and work with.

[28] GEC Guidance – Step Change Window Guidance for Full Application, p.3, GEC Innovation Window Full Application guidance p.4.

Low DFID and FM M&E capacity hindered early programme delivery.

Several DFID and FM respondents highlighted that the DFID and FM team initially lacked understanding of the implications of PbR on M&E and the time needed to develop and deliver the M&E requirements. Several DFID respondents noted that none of the initial GEC team had any experience of PbR.

DFID respondents noted their initial ‘obsession’ with beneficiary numbers at the application stage and a misunderstanding of VfM by using cost per beneficiary as a metric to compare project efficiency without appreciating the context of delivery.

An FM respondent noted that the FM had to grow the size of their in-house M&E team and change their operational structure when it became apparent that the FM would have to provide capacity building for M&E across the board.

Several grantees mentioned that low M&E capacity of external evaluators hindered baseline data collection.

Several SCW and IW projects had difficulty finding an external evaluator who was sufficiently skilled or able to perform the work required. Reasons included the low capacity of local evaluators, and conflict affected or politically sensitive environments which were hard for international evaluators to work in. In the SCW, several of these organisations ended up doing baseline data collection themselves.

4.2.3 In what ways have M&E requirements had positive or negative impacts on grantees and the wider sector?

The GEC’s M&E requirements have benefited grantees by improving organisational capacity in M&E and other functions. Some grantees noted the cost and burden of fulfilling the requirements. Some grantees questioned the relevance of the GEC requirements for other donors.

The GEC is seen as a key driver in understanding and implementing PbR in future DFID programmes. DFID and FM respondents believe that other DFID programmes will increasingly use rigorous PbR and M&E approaches.

Evidence of impacts on the wider sector is limited. Some respondents noted that GEC has built the capacity of the external evaluation markets in GEC countries. Some noted that the GEC may influence increased M&E requirements for DFID and other donor projects in education and other sectors in the future.

M&E requirements have benefited grantees by building organisational capacity in M&E and other functions.

Several project respondents mentioned that their M&E tools or staff capacity that were improved through the GEC have been applied to other projects – tools included education monitoring tools, beneficiary tracking databases, and child protection policies. One IW grantee said that the “FM and EM should be proud of the wider knock on effect. It’s not limited to M&E also financial measures and child protection. We now use child protection policy and other country offices.”

Some grantees noted the cost and burden of fulfilling the requirements.

Some SCW and IW projects mentioned that the rigorous M&E demands took both time and budget away from implementation activities. One IW project mentioned that the GEC process taught them how to say ‘no’ to M&E demands which would have continual resource implications.

Some grantees questioned the relevance of the GEC requirements for other donors.

As mentioned above, several grantees mentioned that the rigorous methods used by the GEC might not be applicable to other projects they were running because no other projects demanded such a level of rigour.

The GEC is seen as a driver in understanding and implementing PbR in future DFID programmes.

Several DFID and FM respondents noted that when the GEC started, DFID did not initially understand the implications of PbR and the rigorous M&E system that was needed to underpin it. Now, some actors inside and outside of DFID, see the GEC as a leading programme on the use of PbR and M&E. An FM respondent mentioned that DFID comes to them for developing business cases with PbR or rigorous M&E requirements, and that the

Australian Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DfAT; previously AusAID) had also wanted to learn from DFID's approach to PbR through the GEC. Another FM respondent said that the GEC is seen as a badge of quality for future projects, especially for IW projects, in terms of the high level of M&E rigour.

Some evidence supports the notion that the GEC evaluation has built the capacity of external evaluation markets in GEC countries.

An FM respondent noted that the GEC's M&E requirements had built the capacity of external evaluators in project countries. The FM had assumed external evaluators would have the capacity to be able to conduct complex evaluations and be able to train enumerators and administrate learning tests. But they did not. The FM respondent mentioned that some survey firms have increased their ability to gather data, and that several IW projects reported a benefit from learning how to work with and manage an external evaluator. However, another FM respondent noted that the market for external evaluators for some countries was small, and that sometimes several GEC projects used one external evaluator and felt they had no other choice regardless of the quality of the outputs produced.

4.2.4 Lessons learned about monitoring and evaluation requirements

Robust M&E is achievable in complex, multi-country development programmes, given adequate resources and management.

GEC M&E requirements were seen as rigorous and robust from nearly all respondents. However, several projects complained about the requirements, including the length and rigour of the baseline household survey, the availability of quality external evaluators, and the use of control or comparison groups. Even so, the proposed approach to M&E was achievable, and all GEC projects were able to produce acceptable M&E frameworks and baselines in the initial phase of the GEC programme. Factors that respondents mentioned as contributing to their success in M&E included: adequate budget provided for M&E activities (sometimes after further negotiation); and adequate technical resources in the form of M&E workshops, handbooks, and other guidance as well as in-person and remote one-to-one support.

A rigorous, coherent, and standardised approach to M&E and PbR takes time to develop.

Due to political pressure, the GEC issued its call for proposals for SCW applicants ten working days after the FM was contracted and before contracting the EM. The FM did not have time to develop their thinking on VfM, PbR, and M&E requirements or to communicate these to applicants. Many SCW and IW projects mentioned that M&E requirements were not clear at first. As a result, most organisations under-budgeted for M&E and some were frustrated at the detailed requirements which were explained to them at different stages post-contract or during the inception phase. A few organisations said that if they had fully understood the requirements they would have reconsidered their applications.

DFID, FM, and EM respondents all mentioned that the GEC would have benefited from a programme inception phase. A programme inception phase could have been used to come up with standard definitions and methodologies for measuring outcome indicators used for PbR and drafting guidance for projects as to how these would be calculated. The programme could also have used the inception phase to identify the required M&E approach (i.e. whether data collection from control or comparison groups will be required) and the level of statistical rigour needed, as both have implications for sample selection and sample sizes, cost and timing.

An inception phase could also have been used to define what constitutes success and failure, particularly in grey areas such as when a project returns results which trend positive or negative but are not statistically significant. These parameters and definitions are crucial because any decisions made on the basis of PbR may result in withholding funds from underperforming organisations, which will need to be defendable.

The management team needs to understand PbR and measurement within the target sector.

Respondents from DFID and the FM identified that there was not enough time to establish the M&E requirements underpinning PbR programmes to be able to adequately design the GEC's approach to M&E, communicate M&E requirements to projects, or set a realistic timeframe for the M&E approval process.

Several DFID and FM respondents mentioned that the selection process had an early fixed focus on project beneficiary numbers and cost per beneficiary without appreciating the intervention or particular contextual challenges. An early understanding of M&E outcomes and targets would have helped the management team compare projects with a broader reach but less depth against those with a narrower focus but a more comprehensive approach in its interventions.

The IW inception phase allowed projects to develop their approaches and provided leverage for compliance with programme requirements.

An inception period leading to a baseline, which may incorporate pre-baseline work, allows projects to mobilise in the field and gather evidence that may inform their project design. Although it may not be attributed to the baseline research, several IW respondents mentioned that the inception phase allowed them to better understand their operational context and re-design their programme as a result. In order to share the risk and financial burden, donors should consider the extent to which they can provide resources for activities during the inception phase, including baseline research.

A go/no-go process gives the donor and the FM leverage over projects in terms of ensuring that they have complied with project requirements. Several respondents felt that SCW projects took advantage of the fact that they had already been contracted to start implementing early or push back on some of the M&E requirements. IW projects were contractually required to have their M&E frameworks approved before proceeding to the implementation phase.

4.3 Payment by results

4.3.1 Rationale for Payment by Results

Payment by Results (PbR) was included in the GEC from the early design stages. One of the reasons was to test PbR in DFID programming. It was used as a mechanism to incentivise projects to deliver results, drive accountability, improve transparency and encourage innovation. For the SCW, PbR intended to collect evidence of the cost of implementing PbR, as well as to share costs with DFID. For the IW, PbR intended to achieve VfM and test new approaches for measuring PbR.

PbR was included in the GEC from the early design stages to test PbR on DFID programming.

The intention to use PbR existed from the concept stage of the GEC. Respondents explained that DFID senior staff including the Secretary of State, Justine Greening, and Permanent Secretary Mark Lowcock wanted PbR to be used on the GEC. A DFID respondent explained, DFID had limited experience in applying PbR and was interested in testing it further in its programmes, including in the education sector. However, there was no common understanding even within DFID about how PbR would be applied in the GEC.

The GEC Business Case and the FM contract were finalised before developing the concept and principles of PbR for the GEC. The first document that states the aims and objectives of PbR shows that the original intention was for SCW projects to apply PbR across a range of five to hundred per cent of project value. In the IW, the intention was for four to six projects to include a significant element of PbR to "focus heavily on gathering evidence on both the impact of the intervention and the use of payment by results as a mechanism."[29]

PbR was proposed across both the SCW and the IW as a mechanism to incentivise projects to deliver results, drive accountability and improve transparency.

Potential benefits relating to the effective use of UK aid spending drove the use of PbR in the GEC. The objectives of PbR common to both the SCW and the IW are to increase accountability and transparency of the projects and the results achieved, as well as to create strong incentives for project implementers to deliver better results.

DFID also identified specific PbR objectives for each of the windows.[30]

- **For the SCW**, in addition to the common objectives listed above, PbR was intended to provide evidence for the cost of implementing PbR, as well as produce evidence of the challenges of implementation for large organisations.**[31]**The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) accompanying the SCW call for concept notes in May 2012 did not explicitly state the rationale for incorporating PbR for the window, but stated that the GEC

[29] GEC PBR aims and Objectives
[30] GEC PBR aims and Objectives
[31] GEC PBR aims and Objectives

is "looking for innovative approaches to payment by results."[32] In the SCW call for full applications, PbR was described as a mechanism to incentivise organisations to deliver results and to ensure that projects represent Value for Money.[33]

- **For the IW,** PbR was intended to drive VfM and encourage innovation. It aimed to produce evidence about improvements in the delivery of results, VfM, efficiency and clarity on unit costs, as well as testing new approaches to measuring educational outcomes. Additionally, the use of PbR aimed to collect lessons learned about the implementation of PbR mechanisms for smaller projects and to encourage innovative solutions to its development. The FM communicated these aims throughout the concept note and full application processes.

  A specific link was made between PbR and innovation in the guidance provided to projects. In the guidance for IW concept notes, PbR was listed as one of the five criteria for innovation. The guidance explained that innovation included "new approaches of utilising Payment by Results to increase Value for Money and achieve outcomes" as well as "new approaches to measuring education outcomes in ways that can inform approaches to Payment by Results."[34] SCW projects were required to use PbR, while IW projects were only encouraged to adopt PbR.

- **For the SPW,** the aims of PbR from the other windows were achieved through cost sharing with the SPW organisations. For the SPW, DFID had no intention to use PbR because match-funding, which all SPW projects were expected to include, achieved most of the objectives of PbR. In the end, SPW projects were not provided guidance or requirements for PbR.

4.3.2 Changes to PbR guidance

During the application stages, projects, especially SCW projects received very limited guidance on how PbR would be implemented. As a result, projects did not know what they were signing up to or opting out of in relation to PbR. A shared understanding of PbR was slowly developed along with a gradual increase in the requirements for projects on PbR. Projects were developing their M&E frameworks before PbR requirements were finalised which resulted, as described by many respondents, in a long and frustrating process that required changes to M&E activities.

Understanding of PbR and identifying the level of rigour in measurement increased gradually.

PbR was mentioned in all guidance provided to applicants at the concept note and the full applications stage. However, the understanding of what PbR intended to achieve and how it should be applied and assessed evolved over time. As an EM respondent noted, the level of rigour of PbR requirements increased gradually and was led by DFID's interest in generating strong global evidence. This translated into the use of robust PbR mechanisms based on impact evaluations. As a result, all projects were required to have a counterfactual design involving primary quantitative data collection and analysis for control and treatment groups.

Unclear guidance about PbR created challenges for the design of M&E frameworks.

The FM is responsible for the contractual and governance aspects of PbR. The FM had to decide the basis on which projects' PbR would be assessed. The EM, on the other hand, and according to their original mandate, played an advisory role on PbR measurement to ensure a sufficient level of rigor of projects' M&E designs. PbR assessment relies on evidencing the achievement of results and targets that are set out in project design documents, logframes and in project M&E frameworks. This led to an overlap in the work of the FM and the EM and challenges in sequencing discussions with grantees. The FM took a leading role in PbR, after realising the implication that PbR targets and measurement tools would have on the M&E of projects and the legal implications that PbR might have for DFID. The FM worked extensively to develop the requirements and tools for measuring and managing PbR. This process took about five months and ended in April 2013. By the time that the FM communicated the PbR requirements to the EM and to projects, projects were already working with the FM and EM on developing their M&E frameworks and two SCW projects had already had their M&E frameworks approved by the FM.

[32] The FAQs accompanying the SCW Concept Note
[33] Guidance to applicants submitting a Full Application for IW
[34] Innovation Window- Call for Concept Notes (launched 9th July 2012)

SCW projects signed up to PbR without fully understanding its implications.

For the SCW, PbR was a clear requirement in all application documentation. However, the documents did not specify how PbR would be measured or what the implications were for projects. This is because neither DFID nor the FM had developed a clear understanding of PbR for the GEC by this point.

At the IW call for concept notes, the FM encouraged applicants to include PbR through its inclusion as one of the scoring criteria for innovation. At this time, there was no guidance on PbR. The FM also encouraged applicants to include match funding, which was scored as a VfM criteria. Many applicants opted to include match funding and almost none opted for PbR. After the application stage, as DFID's interest in testing PbR became greater, the FM strongly encouraged projects to include PbR instead of match funding.

DFID and FM respondents noted that like the SCW application stages, during the IW application stages, it was not yet clear how PbR would be applied in practice, which is why there was minimal guidance for applicants. Not surprisingly, IW respondents also explained that at the application stage, they did not have a clear idea of what PbR would entail and how it would be applied or measured.

During discussions that led to the signing of their Accountable Grant Arrangements (AGAs), selected SCW and IW projects were made aware of the level of rigor that PbR would require especially in terms of M&E.

PbR learning targets and outcome indicators changed.

The FM made changes to PbR as it researched and developed its own tools for management, monitoring, and evaluation and as projects provided feedback. Key changes to the guidance provided to projects were:

- **Setting learning targets:** early guidance set the learning target as the difference between the top 25th percentile performance and the mean for girls in the grade above a given cohort at midline, and two grades above a given cohort at endline. As the understanding of PbR requirements developed, the learning targets changed to a 0.2 standard deviation of effect size.
- **Outcome indicators for PbR:** as projects were developing their M&E frameworks and baselines, many projects faced challenges in collecting attendance data. As a result, projects were given the option to remove attendance from their PbR, which most projects did.

Additionally, DFID later ruled that projects working in fragile contexts were exempt from the requirement for PbR to have a counterfactual design with control groups. . This was based on the FM's recommendation and because projects raised ethical, security and practical challenges of the PbR requirements, in particular the use of control groups in high risk and fragile environments.

Effects of the delay in communicating PbR guidance to grantees

The delays and gradual communication of PbR guidance was a challenging process. Respondents described the following key issues:

- **PbR was a key factor driving a high level of M&E rigour and generating robust evidence.** Several respondents from the EM, FM and DFID stated that incorporating PbR in the GEC drove the level of rigour for projects' M&E. As a result of this there were sequencing issues with the design of M&E frameworks given the delays in the development and dissemination of PbR guidance.
- **A lack of clear guidance on PbR caused confusion and frustration for grantees, and delays in implementation.** Many respondents noted that the gradual development and communication of the requirements of PbR caused delays in implementation. This is further discussed in the M&E section. Many projects misinterpreted PbR and understood it to be milestone based payments, which meant some projects signed up to high percentages of PbR, including 100 per cent based PbR. Most of the other projects understood the concept of PbR, but not how it would be measured.
- **IW projects felt compelled through the application and selection process to include PbR to improve their chances of being selected.** IW, applicants signed up to PbR because was it was presented as a criterion for innovation at the application stage, and the FM had encouraged them to adopt it. Many projects opted out of PbR once they realised that PbR entailed: allocating significant resources to delivering the requirements; investing substantial effort to measure their performance to meet PbR reporting requirements; and putting a significant part of their budget at risk of not being paid in the event of under-performance against agreed targets.

4.3.3 How has PbR influenced project design?

Most projects stated that they did not change their design during inception phase due to PbR. Projects were reluctant to change the design of their projects because of the resources involved, the timing of PbR guidance, and lack of incentives to change project design coming from PbR. Projects also suggested that PbR limited projects' innovation.

As the FM's understanding of PbR and the associated M&E requirements were developed, organisations were expected not only to revise their M&E frameworks, but also to change their project targets and designs. This was to ensure that they complied with PbR requirements, had realistic and attainable targets, and included the most relevant and effective interventions.

PbR did not change most projects' designs, interventions and targeting for a number of reasons.

Most project respondents expressed that PbR did not affect the design of their interventions. Projects presented a number of reasons for not changing their project design because of PbR, including:

- Some projects did not see why PbR would affect their project design. One respondent felt that their organisation did not want to distort or pervert their project design because of PbR;
- Other projects assumed, based on previous experience with donors, that they could not radically change their proposed design after being selected;
- Some projects knew that the GEC was open to projects changing their design. However, these projects were reluctant to change their design because the PbR structure meant that changes in project logframes and milestones required a contract amendment. For these projects, the effort of going through a bureaucratic contract amendment process every time that they made a significant change in project design dis-incentivised them from redesigning their projects even when they had new information; and
- Some organisations were unwilling to change their project design because they had already invested time and effort in the design of their project. An FM respondent highlighted that this is especially relevant for SCW projects, which had invested more into their programme design during the application stage.

However, several FM respondents noted that once projects better understood how PbR was measured, some projects did decrease their expected beneficiary numbers. A few projects did report that PbR affected their project design. For example, one SCW project respondent explained that they added a new component to their project design to achieve learning targets, as they would not have met both the numeracy and literacy targets through their original design.

Timing and understanding of PbR guidance may have affected the design of interventions and targeting.

Some project respondents stated that had they been given clearer instructions and guidance earlier on how PbR would be measured and assessed, they would have changed their target group and interventions. For example, a project respondent explained that they would have conducted a thorough risk analysis that would have led to changes to their interventions or targeting strategies to ensure that they selected a target group where change would have been easier, faster and therefore, more guaranteed. This suggests that projects would have targeted less marginalised groups in order to have better chances of achieving targets within the timeframe of the project.

PbR may have limited innovation because of the associated risk of not being paid.

While most projects noted that they did not change their project designs, FM respondents explained that PbR affected project design because it limited innovation by projects. Projects sought to design and implement interventions that were less risky and more likely to enable them to reach their targets and receive payments as a result. As innovative approaches tend to be riskier than tried and tested approaches and interventions, projects were reluctant to include innovation in their designs. As a result, PbR was seen as a tool for accountability in achieving results achievement, but limiting innovation in project designs and delivery processes.

4.3.4 How has PbR improved value for money for the Step Change Window projects?

We focused on examining the extent to which PbR acted as an incentive for projects to deliver better results, or better value. We found that PbR may not act as an incentive for not-for-profit organisations, because they may not be incentivised by reward payments. On the other hand, PbR can ensure consistency in achieving results.

The process review focused on examining the extent to which PbR acted as an incentive for projects to deliver better results, or better value. In the context of the SCW, better results and better value can be understood as achieving targets, reaching the hardest to reach, and achieving better education outcomes. This is particularly important because the GEC VfM metrics assess the economy and cost-effectiveness aspect of VfM, and do not provide a complete picture about value.

The views of projects, the EM and FM differed on the extent to which PbR acted as an incentive to deliver better value.

Respondents provided a number of differing views, including:

- **Not-for-profit organisations are not necessarily incentivised by PbR.** One project respondent noted that INGOs are not necessarily motivated or incentivised by payment. Instead, they may be more incentivised by their achievements in delivering results for the communities and groups they're supporting. Similarly, FM and EM respondents noted that not-for-profit organisations are not necessarily set up to be incentivised by payments because they are driven by different values and purposes. As a result, the reward that they receive if they exceed their targets on PbR may not incentivise them to achieve better results.
- **PbR can limit innovation, targeting the hardest to reach and delivering desired results.** This is because organisations may limit the level of risk that they incorporate into their design and activities. They may opt for less innovative interventions and less risky approaches that have already been tried and tested.

  PbR is also seen as limiting the ability of projects to target the most marginalised girls because it would require using riskier interventions, which may not deliver results and as a consequence affect payment. One project respondent explained that PbR is a challenge for some organisations that are generally able to deliver. This is because the withheld payment affects their liquidity and their ability to implement activities.
- **PbR ensures coherence and consistency in achieving results that relate to PbR.** PbR ensures coherence and consistency across projects subject to PbR because it unites organisations in achieving a common goal, which in the GEC is improved learning. It also ensures a consistent approach to measuring improvements in outcomes, in this case learning. However, one organisation explained that because of limited resources, PbR may lead to organisations neglecting other interventions, milestones and intended aims of the project that are not subject to PbR.

4.3.5 How has PbR made Innovation Window projects more accountable?

Mixed findings emerged about the ability of PbR to increase the accountability of IW projects. PbR, especially from a risk sharing perspective, was perceived as a key driver of project accountability because it requires robust evidence to be generated by rigorous M&E systems to justify payment of a portion of the budget that is subject to PbR.

PbR required rigorous M&E activities for projects to demonstrate the required levels of accountability for the results that would justify payment.

PbR was introduced in DFID programmes and in the GEC to increase the accountability and transparency of projects, which meant projects would need to "have in place a comprehensive system of data monitoring and data collection."[35]

Interview respondents indicated that PbR drove greater accountability because it shared the risk of not delivering results between projects and DFID because payment was conditional on achieving set targets. This is because the FM was approving or withholding payment based on evidence of results. Applying PbR requires robust and

[35] DFID GEC and PBR - aims and objectives, DFID

credible data to be collected to evidence and demonstrate the results that are delivered, which then triggers the appropriate level of payment. The level of rigour of project M&E increased for both the SCW and IW projects as direct consequence of the PbR mechanism.

One IW project respondent explained that their organisation decided to opt out of PbR because they could not guarantee the reliability of their data and were not confident in their ability to evidence their results.

4.3.6 Lessons learned about Payment by Results

While the timing and scope of our research provided limited information about PbR for GEC, this section captures the lessons learned from our areas of focus, as well as other general findings about PbR that emerged from discussions with interviewees.

Develop and share guidance on PbR at the application stage when applicants are designing and planning their projects.

Developing PbR guidance and communicating it as early as possible in the commissioning and design process allows applicants to fully consider the implications for compliance with the requirements for their project designs and their management plans. This allows applicants to make informed decisions about whether they want to apply for funding given the PbR requirements and what type of proposals they want to submit and develop.

PbR may not act as an incentive for projects to achieve better results and to innovate.

PbR works by stretching projects to deliver better results if, very early on, they fully understand the purpose of PbR as a performance management mechanism, how the PbR mechanism works in practice and are aware of the potentially positive and negative implications.

For programmes that aim to provide the opportunity for innovation, PbR may act as a disincentive for projects to innovate. While PbR may serve as an incentive for projects to deliver better results, it may result in projects minimising risk by limiting their use of innovative ideas and instead opting for proven ways of delivering their interventions.

The reward system of PbR also may not necessarily align with the incentive mechanisms of not-for-profit organisations, which are may be more inclined to focus on achieving results rather than performing to respond to payment.

PbR requirements ensure robust evidence of results, but may not be appropriate in all contexts.

PbR is difficult for many organisations, especially for smaller organisations and those operating in fragile contexts.

PbR does not necessarily work when it is universally applied to all types of projects, grantee organisations and in all contexts. As with any performance management PbR should be designed and applied to take into account the type of organisation that is being incentivised by the PbR, to do what, for whom, with what effects, when and under what type of conditions. Different types of PbR mechanisms need to be tailored to suit different types of projects, contexts and incentive structures.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

This process review focused on specific areas of the GEC that would help DFID and other policy-makers to design and develop similar programmes in the future. For this purpose the process review focused on the:

- challenge fund design;
- monitoring and evaluation (M&E) requirements; and
- Payment by Results (PbR).

While the review was structured by these focus areas, we found considerable overlap between them. Each of these focus areas are sometimes directly and indirectly affected by each other – for example, the links between PbR and M&E that provides the evidence for results and ultimately payment. For the sake of clarity and to avoid repetition, our conclusions are similarly structured. However, we have tried to capture within each conclusion what has worked well, what was found to be a challenge at the start but was addressed over time, and aspects of the delivery process that remain a challenge that should be addressed in future programmes.

5.1 Conclusions

Central management of the GEC through a Fund Manager was more effective than other options.

The GEC is a complex, multi-country, multi-window challenge fund that is centrally managed by a Fund Manager. The rationale for central management set out in the Business Case included being able to develop standardised assessments and guidance, lower transaction costs and an ability to compare applications and results across countries. The GEC benefited from central management through a consistent set of processes for applications, guidance and decisions made around issues including financial reporting, M&E requirements and PbR guidance. DFID also did not have the capacity, including staff, level of flexibility or in-house technical expertise to manage a programme the size and complexity of the GEC. By using a Fund Manager, a relatively small team within DFID has been able to have greater oversight and focus more on the strategic vision moving forward.

Beyond these efficiencies, central management allowed performance measurement, lesson learning and comparisons to be made at a global scale. All 37 projects collected data consistently, according to GEC requirements, which can be used to provide valuable evidence and lesson learning across countries and the programme as a whole.

More could have been done to regularly involve DFID country offices to leverage their local knowledge and resources.

When DFID country offices effectively engaged with the GEC they added a lot of value by practically assisting the design and delivery process through their contextual, policy and programmatic country knowledge. But because the GEC did not resource its programme through DFID country offices, its ability to leverage the knowledge and resources of these country offices was inconsistent and limited, particularly for SCW and IW projects. Successful leverage depended on the availability and willingness of the in-country Education Adviser to give time to the GEC, including meeting with projects and the FM and EM when in-country. Although in-country Education Advisers were consulted during project selection, they were not consistently able to inform and add value to the programme delivery process. There was no formal communication between projects and DFID country offices, and some projects noted this disconnect and the lack of in-country support. As a result, projects mentioned overlaps between the GEC and other DFID projects in-country that were only discovered later on in the process.

The addition of the FM's Country Monitors helped projects and enhanced DFID country offices' involvement in the GEC.

At the start of the programme, in-country support from the FM was limited during the project design and baseline stages for IW and SCW. The FM did not have the time, capacity or budget in the early stages of the GEC to be available in-country. But over time, the introduction of Country Monitors and the adoption of a more regional management structure helped address the lack of in-country support that GEC projects felt they were missing and may have improved the regularity of DFID country offices' involvement in the programme.

Three different funding windows allowed for a more nuanced design responding to DFID's different strategic objectives for the GEC.

The design of the GEC allowed DFID and the FM to define specific objectives through each of the three funding windows. This also allowed the FM and EM to provide tailored support to projects that met their needs and expectations. For example, the provision of in-country one-to-one support for IW projects helped them achieve better quality M&E frameworks. Likewise, the FM's flexible and responsive approach to SPW partners helped attract, develop and negotiate agreements with private sector partners.

A programme inception phase to design and set up the GEC was critical.

It is difficult to demonstrate how different parts of a complex programme like the GEC relate to one another. But it is clear from the review that a lack of time available at the start of the programme to design and set up the GEC affected many different parts of the delivery process. The FM was contracted less than two weeks before the launch of the first and largest window, the SCW. The FM was unable to put in place clear processes and guidance for applicants. There was no time to discuss and agree definitions and methodologies for PbR, think through and develop M&E requirements, and communicate these requirements to potential grantees at the application stage. This resulted in confusion for applicants and grantees from the start that had knock-on effects throughout the commissioning and baseline process. Once the SCW and IW were launched, DFID, the FM and the EM had to catch up with the commissioning process, which led to some delays and frustration for projects.

The staggered approach to launching the three windows helped ensure lessons were learned and applied.

The lack of an inception phase made it difficult for the GEC to provide clear and consistent guidance to SCW and IW projects around M&E and PbR both before and after contracting. However, DFID, the FM and EM were able to incorporate guidance and lessons learned from the SCW through the support it provided to projects in the IW and SPW. As a result, applicants, grantees and partners were able to better assess the GEC's M&E requirements and decide whether they were in a position to meet them and how they would do this.

An inception phase for IW projects provided an opportunity to proactively support the project design process and provided leverage to ensure compliance with GEC requirements.

The decision that IW projects should have an inception phase is a good example of adaptive management in the GEC. Although the GEC did not initially envision project inception phases for either SCW or IW projects, DFID and the FM later decided to include an inception phase for IW projects. The purpose of the inception phase was to support and help IW projects get to a stage in the development of their designs where DFID felt comfortable contracting them for implementation. The inclusion of an inception phase gave projects time to develop their designs and M&E frameworks and develop stronger relationships with the FM. Despite this, some projects felt that there was too much focus on developing M&E frameworks, which meant they couldn't spend as much time as they wanted developing their project designs.

This two-stage approach to contracting in the IW gave DFID and the FM leverage over the quality of the project designs that several respondents felt they did not have with SCW projects who were contracted from the start. They explained that some of the SCW projects resisted changing their project designs in response to their baseline findings and new information about PbR requirements. This might have been overcome through clearer guidance about these requirements earlier on in the process and by adopting a similar approach to the IW that allowed more time for projects to absorb what they learned and adapt their designs. Respondents from DFID, the FM and the EM also noted that the GEC did not have as much leverage over SCW projects because they had already been contracted and that a "go/no-go" decision would have been a useful lever to ensure greater compliance. For some projects a two-stage contracting process created a potential barrier to investment in capital equipment with a long lead-in period. This meant some grantees had to carry a significant amount of risk before receiving approval to progress to implementation if they wanted to stay on track and achieve their planned milestones.

The GEC succeeded in including private sector partners in its portfolio by using a different approach to working with the private sector.

The FM's approach to the SPW led to different types of partnerships focused on delivering development outcomes that are an innovative feature of the GEC. By working with different private sector organisations in the SPW funding rounds, the FM was in a unique position to provide advice and support to bring organisations with complementary offerings together. Furthermore, some SPW partners were able to bring in additional private sector partners through their work in girls' education. For example, Coca-Cola secured funding from MasterCard in Nigeria to complement its work with out-of-school girls on the GEC.

The private sector has different ways of working to the public sector and tended to view DFID's approaches as too structured and inflexible and its requirements as overly burdensome. The FM acknowledged that the tools used for INGOs were not appropriate for the private sector and over time adapted them to take a more pragmatic approach to working with private sector partners. The FM has also conducted a SPW consultation, which will further inform the way forward for continued and future engagement with private sector partners in the SPW.

The GEC has targeted marginalised girls, some are extremely marginalised, but the 'most' marginalised are not systematically reached across the GEC.

The DFID Business Case defined marginalised as "those girls of primary and secondary school age (approximate age range of 6-19) who have not been enrolled or have dropped out from school (whether living in slums, remote areas, ethnic minorities, girls with disabilities etc.) or are in danger of doing so." Marginalisation was defined in terms of the education outcomes that DFID wanted the GEC to focus on.

At the start of the GEC, DFID decided not to prescribe the type of factors or underlying causes that marginalised girls from education. This was appropriate because there was a lack of evidence about what caused girls' marginalisation and it was clear that the factors driving complex problems would vary from one context to another. For this reason, applicants were required to explain how and why the girls they were targeting were marginalised from education. While it is clear that many of the girls targeted by GEC projects are marginalised and extremely marginalised in some places, it is not always clear that targeted girls are always the most marginalised. If the intention is to systematically target the most marginalised through project targeting strategies and designs then this should be made a more explicit focus of programmes in the future. However, the EM's baseline reports for the SCW and IW concluded that many projects had not sufficiently identified the link between factors that marginalised girls, such as disability or poverty and specifically how and to what extent this impacted on their education.

The target of reaching one million girls and a focus on low unit costs per beneficiary initially drove the selection process to value the quantity reached over the degree of marginalisation targeted by projects.

An early policy commitment of the GEC was to reach one million girls. This affected the initial assessment and selection process, especially with the early introduction of a cost per beneficiary metric. Particularly for the SCW, this led to a tendency during the selection process to value quantity over quality in terms of the type of groups that were reached and the degree to which they were marginalised from education. However, after initial selection more consideration was given to the degree of marginalisation compared to the scale of reach. It is understandable that a results-driven programme like the GEC that is seeking to have a significant impact on marginalised girls would focus on the scale of its reach. But with the growing evidence that the GEC is now gathering about the nature and scale of marginalisation that girls face across different contexts, there is an opportunity to develop targeting strategies that are more context-specific, more nuanced and that still achieve value for money.

Robust M&E is achievable in complex, multi-country development programmes, given adequate resources, planning and management.

The GEC accomplished its objective of embedding robust M&E in a complex, multi-country, multi-window programme delivering outcomes in challenging places. Although there were issues with timing and sequencing, the FM and EM provided substantial guidance and one-to-one remote and face-to-face support for all projects. As a direct result, all projects produced M&E frameworks that met project M&E standards and provided a consistent means of measuring project level outcomes. The rigour and comparability of data collected at baseline will enable the GEC to assess whether projects are beginning to have an impact at midline as well as providing robust evidence to inform decisions made under PbR.

Respondents from DFID, the FM, EM, and projects noted that projects' capacity for meeting GEC M&E requirements had increased. Several SCW projects mentioned seeing the rigour required from the GEC evaluation as a learning exercise. Several project respondents mentioned that M&E tools or staff capacity developed through the GEC have been applied to other projects, including education monitoring tools, beneficiary tracking databases, and child protection policies. One IW grantee said that the "FM and EM should be proud of the wider knock on effect. It's not limited to M&E also financial measures and child protection. We now use child protection policy in other country offices."

But the M&E capacity of projects was generally lower than expected, and the level of one-to-one support, including in-country field visits, was greater than originally envisioned. The ability of grantees to analyse and effectively use the vast amounts of data collected in refining their initial theories of change and their logframe indicators was limited. For some projects the capacity building benefits have been diluted where the development of M&E frameworks was outsourced to external organisations.

PbR drives a coherent and consistent approach to delivering the type of results that DFID wanted to achieve through the GEC.

PbR drives coherence and consistency across projects subject to PbR because it unites organisations in achieving a common goal, which in the GEC is improved learning. It also ensures a consistent approach to measuring improvements in outcomes. Interview respondents indicated that PbR drove greater accountability because it shared the risk of not delivering results between projects and DFID because payment was conditional on achieving set targets. Several DFID and FM respondents noted that when the GEC started, DFID did not initially understand the implications of PbR and the rigorous M&E system needed to underpin it. Now, some actors inside and outside of DFID, see the GEC as a leading programme in the use of PbR and M&E.

The understanding of PbR in the GEC and the level of rigour in measurement required increased gradually and requirements were adapted iteratively.

PbR was mentioned in all guidance provided to applicants at the concept note and the full applications stage. However, the understanding of what PbR intended to achieve and how it should be applied and assessed evolved over time. The FM made changes to PbR as it researched and developed its own tools for management, monitoring, and evaluation and as projects provided feedback, specifically the way that learning targets were set and the decision to remove attendance as an outcome indicator for PbR.

As mentioned earlier, there was a lack of time to develop the processes and tools required to set up PbR properly from the very start. The approach and guidance that was eventually developed needed to be communicated as early as possible in the commissioning and design process to allow applicants to fully consider the implications for compliance with the requirements for their project designs and their management plans. This would have allowed applicants to make informed decisions about whether they wanted to apply for funding given the PbR requirements and what type of proposals they wanted to submit and develop.

PbR may not be universally appropriate for all types of projects, organisations and contexts.

PbR works by stretching projects to deliver better results if, very early on, they fully understand the purpose of PbR as a performance management mechanism, how the PbR mechanism works in practice and are aware of the potentially positive and negative implications. However, PbR acted as a disincentive for innovation. IW projects explained that while their projects had innovative elements incorporated into their project design, the GEC's focus on educational outcomes, the number of girls reached and a focus on PbR did not provide them with enough incentive to innovate. For some projects, the reward system of PbR also may not necessarily align with the incentive mechanisms of not-for-profit organisations, which may be more inclined to focus on achieving results rather than performing to respond to payment. During implementation, projects working in fragile contexts were granted exemption from the requirement for PbR and the need for a counterfactual evaluation design with control groups. This was based on the FM's recommendation and because projects raised ethical, security and practical challenges of the PbR requirements such as the use of control groups in high risk and fragile environments.

PbR does not necessarily work when it is universally applied to all types of projects, grantee organisations and in all contexts. As with any performance management mechanism, PbR should be designed and applied to take into account the type of organisation that is being incentivised by the PbR, to do what, for whom, with what effects, when and under what type of conditions. Different types of PbR mechanisms need to be tailored to suit different types of projects, contexts and incentive structures.

5.2 Recommendations

The recommendations arising from the process review are mainly for DFID and are intended to inform future similar programmes.

DFID

- **Central management of a complex, multi-country, multi-window challenge fund like the GEC is effective at achieving a consistent approach across a global programme. But global programmes should ensure that linkages with DFID country offices and support through mechanisms such as Country Monitors are built into the programme design from the start.** Programmes that operate globally should ensure DFID country offices are involved at all stages of the programme. DFID country involvement has varied across countries and windows. DFID country education advisers (where available) offer contextual understanding, in-country relationships and technical expertise. Establishing and facilitating official lines of communication between DFID country education advisers and the FM, EM and projects would enable these to be leveraged. Communication could be facilitated through monthly meetings and would need to be specifically included in the DFID country education advisers' scope of work. Other in-country programme support mechanisms may be required, such as regional or country monitors to provide projects with regular face-to-face support and to maintain a consistent level of oversight across projects for performance management purposes.
- **Future similar programmes should include an inception phase. This should allow enough time for DFID, the FM and EM to design and set up the approach to programme and performance management including PbR and M&E and to develop the tools and guidance required.** An inception phase to establish the project design process and programme systems should be included at the start of a challenge fund. This inception phase should allow time to develop indicators and project guidance on PbR and M&E. If an EM is contracted, the EM's contract and inception phase should start at the same time as the FM to ensure that the design of the programme M&E framework complements the programme design.
- **An inception phase should be included for grantees to allow enough time for them to review and revise their theories of change and adapt their project designs.** An inception phase for planning, design and capacity building should be included for all projects in a challenge fund. This period of time allows projects to collect and analyse baseline data to test their theories of change and underlying assumptions and adapt their project designs and budgets as required. Some projects in the GEC (e.g. BRAC in Sierra Leone) conducted pre-baseline surveys to ensure that they were targeting the right girls in the right areas before conducting more comprehensive baseline study. The inception phase also serves as a period for bridging gaps in capacity and ensuring that the project is compliant with the programme's requirements. An inception phase followed by a "go or no-go decision" for all projects should also be considered. It reduces the initial risk absorbed by DFID when contracting projects from the start for the whole project period.
- **Different types of funding windows should be used to support different strategic objectives. The way the windows are set up, designed and managed should be tailored to the distinct objectives for each window.** The lessons learned about what worked well with the SPW support the recommendation that the design of funding windows and the way that they are expected to work should be driven by the type and scale of outcomes that DFID wants to achieve. In this case, a flexible and pragmatic approach based on a realistic understanding of the values shared by DFID and private sector partners has proved effective. Similarly, DFID's approach to innovation and the type and level of innovation it wants to incentivise and achieve through an innovation window should drive the approach to its design. The IW has a strong focus on results, PbR, and performance management that is consistent with the SCW. As a result the IW is driven to achieve a set of outcomes that is coherent with the rest of the GEC, but potentially at the expense of more radical ideas and innovation. DFID needs to consider the level of risk it is willing to accept. A less risk adverse approach would place less emphasis on results, a greater focus on testing the process of change, and allow more room for failure. This would serve to test and understand how and why innovative approaches succeed or fail.

- **A universal approach to targeting girls marginalised from education was appropriate at the start of the GEC. DFID now has a growing evidence base that it can use to target specific groups of girls who experience particular barriers to education or are marginalised from education at different stages in their life.** Before the GEC, the global evidence base about girls' education and what marginalised them was weak. The GEC needed to quickly, efficiently and effectively deliver a large impact to improve girls' education across a wide range of contexts. A universal focus on reaching one million marginalised girls to improve their education outcomes clearly defined DFID's ambition in this respect. However, we now know more about the extent to which girls are marginalised from education, why and how this happens under different types of contexts. This provides DFID with an opportunity to develop a segmented approach to targeting programme results that are more nuanced and better reflect the context-specific nature of different ways in which girls are marginalised at different stages in their lives and school experience.
- **A rigorous approach to M&E can be achieved and is useful. But it needs to be appropriate to the strategic objectives of a particular funding window, the type of interventions and context in which projects are delivered.** Developing and implementing a rigorous approach to M&E is important and useful. But, the approach and the design of a project M&E framework should be appropriate for the type of intervention design and the context in which it is being delivered. This means that a universal (one size fits all) evaluation design should not necessarily be applied to all projects because it may not always help them deliver their objectives and may not be appropriate. At the project level, each project should be asked to undertake an evaluability assessment of their theory of change, which includes an assessment of the feasibility of practically implementing the M&E design given the conditions that the project will face. The expectations and requirements for implementing a rigorous M&E approach should be clearly communicated at an early stage of the programme. This allows projects to plan and budget for their M&E appropriately and potentially avoid discouraging smaller organisations or organisations with particularly innovative, but riskier approaches.
- **Decisions about the use of PbR should be made early on in the process and its implementation should be tailored and adapted to the type of organisation, the project objectives and its context.** Policy decisions need to be made at the early stages of the programme design about whether PbR is to be applied, for what reasons, and under what programme conditions. PbR may incentivise grantees to stretch their performance to exceed their targets or it may lead to risk adverse behaviour. PbR approaches need to be tailored to the design and delivery context for each project rather than universally applied to all projects in the same way. Developing and implementing PbR across a programme takes time. So its use should be considered from the outset and then planned accordingly. Specifically, sufficient time should be allocated at the programme inception phase for the development and introduction of PbR policies and related reporting and performance measurement and management requirements.

FM

- **The FM should continue to provide support and guidance on PbR and M&E to projects.** The GEC's PbR and M&E requirements remain a challenge and a source of frustration for grantees. This is mainly due to capacity constraints and at times a lack of understanding of PbR, specifically about how it is assessed and its consequences. Clearly communicating the policies and requirements of PbR, including their implications for projects may help manage grantees' expectations and gain their buy-in to the process and its implications.

Grantees

- **Projects should continue to develop a sufficiently detailed understanding about the ways in which their target groups of girls are marginalised from education and how they relate to other members of their communities.** Projects should continue to review and refine their understanding of their target groups, including how girls are marginalised compared to other members of their communities, why they are being targeted and how the project is addressing the type of factors that specifically marginalise girls from education.

Annex A - GEC Process Review Research Framework

Area	EQ	Research Question	Areas of focus/ investigation	Desk review	SCW	IW	SPW	FM	EM	DFID
Design Features of the Fund			Definition and reach of most marginalised girls	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	1.1	**What were the advantages and disadvantages of using a Challenge Fund approach compared to other approaches including bilateral aid and other DFID Challenge Fund type operations?**	Rationale for Challenge Fund in relation to innovation Interpretation and communication (of rationale) in GEC design and to stakeholders Effect on projects' design: flexibility	x	x	x	x	x		x
			Design of the fund and ability to attract private sector Process of engagement with corporate sector Result of engagement	x			x	x		x
	1.2	**To what extent did the selection criteria for the SCW projects result in projects starting up quickly and how was this explained?**	What are the criteria; the rationale for selection criteria- no inception phase; Process of communicating selection criteria; Understanding of the communicated selection criteria; Selection criteria effect on GEC partners and projects design	x	x			x		x
			Effect of not having an inception phase		x			x	x	x
			Management of expectations		x			x	x	
	1.3	**What were the strengths and weaknesses of including an Inception Phase for IW projects?**	Effects of inception phase on design: Change to innovation of projects; Change to targets			x		x		x
			Effects of inception phase on M&E capacity: Change to rigour of M&E, Ability to demonstrate results, Meet the needs of IW in relation to GEC requirements			x		x	x	

			Inception phase and implications on project budget; Ability to allocate and mobilize resources			x		x		
			Private sector enabling innovation	x			x	x	x	x
	1.4	**What lessons have been learnt from the negotiation and partnership approach to working with SPW partners?**	Design of the SPW representing VfM				x	x	x	x
			Opportunity to leverage investment				x	x		x
Monitoring and Evaluation	2.1	**How have M&E requirements and support affected grantees' and partners [for strategic partnerships] ability to produce rigorously designed, monitored, and evaluated projects?**	M&E resources; Changes in capacity to do M&E ; Changes to budget for M&E	x	x	x	x	x	x	
			M&E support & time; FM support meet identified needs and requirements; EM support meet identified needs and requirements; Time for M&E development	x	x	x	x	x	x	
			Learning from baseline; Use of M&E and baseline for learning and adaptive management; Effects of M&E on project design	x	x	x	x	x	x	
			GEC design M&E enabling adaptive management	x	x	x		x		x
	2.2	**In what ways have M&E requirements had positive or negative impacts on grantees and the wider sector?**	Capacity of sector to do M&E; Leveraging of M&E experience by grantees for other projects; Quality of external evaluators; Ability of organisations to do EGRA/EGMA	x	x	x	x	x	x	
			Effect of GEC on policy					x		x
Payment by Results	3.1	**How has Payment by Results (PbR) influenced project design?**	PbR effect on beneficiaries; targets		x	x		x		x
			PbR effect on projects interventions		x	x		x		

		PbR effect on projects M&E ; Rigour of M&E; Budget implications	x	x	x	x	x	
		PbR guidance- quality and timing	x	x	x	x		x
		Change in beneficiaries, target groups/locations Change in design of project; budget allocations		x	x	x	x	x
3.2	**How has PbR improved value for money for the Step Change Window projects?**	SCW projects sharing risk; SCW showing confidence in results that they will deliver; SCW commitments and incentive		x	x	x	x	x
		Changes in expectations for Innovation Window; guidance for PbR changed	x	x	x	x		x
3.3	**How has PbR made IW projects more accountable?**	Sharing risk; Innovation of IW projects after PbR			x	x		x
		IW understanding of PbR; IW projects sharing risk; M&E system; showing confidence in results that they will deliver			x	x	x	x

Annex B - Background Information for Selected Sections

This section provides background information for some of the process review questions and findings. It provides relevant and more detailed information about the rationale and the context for these questions.

5.2.1 What were the advantages and disadvantages of using a challenge fund approach?

Projects do not systematically reach the most marginalised girls

The target group "most marginalised girls" was not clearly defined by the FM and DFID. In the GEC business case, the target group "the most marginalised girls" was defined as girls between the ages of six to nineteen, who have not been enrolled or have dropped out from school or are in danger of doing so. The level of education for the girls was not set and instead, it was proposed for each country to determine where needs were greatest in terms of access, drop out, quality and progression. The GEC business case also left open the characteristics of these girls by describing them as "living in slums, remote areas, ethnic minorities, girls with disabilities, etc."[36] .

DFID did not further define marginalisation in any guidance documents. Similarly, the Fund Manager did not further define marginalisation in its call for concept notes in SCW and IW and the need to reach the "most marginalised girls" was never formally communicated to applicants or projects[37]. DFID and the Fund Manager in guidance to projects described the target group as "marginalised girls". In the SPW second round of funding, "marginalised girls" are described as "girls who have either had no access to education, or have dropped out of school, or are in danger of doing so."[38]

Reaching one million girls was a higher priority than reaching the most marginalised girls

Although the GEC did not provide a specific definition for marginalisation, it was clear in the GEC business case and across all guidance documents that the GEC had a target of reaching one million girls[39]. This target made public in 2012 through the SCW launch event, on the GEC website, and various other PR material.

The GEC had robust M&E requirements to make sure that it could demonstrate that it had improved learning outcomes for one million girls.

While the definition of marginalisation and their target group appeared flexible, projects were aware that they would need to demonstrate that their identified target group had achieved educational outcomes. Between their original full application and the final design submission, all of the IW projects reduced their target numbers[40].

The GEC portfolio is composed of nine new partners to DFID

A challenge fund approach is associated with sparking innovation because of its competitive process and open call to new partners[41]. In the GEC appraisal case, a challenge fund approach was seen as suitable as it would be "able to discover new players and approaches" and could "be less bureaucratic".

The GEC attracted innovative projects, but the most innovative projects may no longer be part of the GEC.

In the GEC appraisal case, innovation was seen as a key advantage of the challenge fund approach with the understanding that the GEC would "need to provide a balanced approach between providing support for projects with a proven track record and taking measured risks to support projects that are new and innovative".

Guidance about the type of innovation expected in the GEC varied across windows. In SCW, at the concept note stage, innovation was described as "implementing an existing project in a different context, making adjustments to usual methods to increase their impact or initiating a new type of project"[42] . At the full application stage, the FM

[36] GEC Business Case v.3, September 2011
[37] In the GEC Guidance for Innovation Window, marginalised girls are defined as "defined as girls aged 6-19 who have either had no access to education or have dropped out of school, early and have had limited opportunities to learn."
[38] Second round FAQs, 30th April 2013
[39] GEC Business case v3. Sept 2011
[40] FDS (all)
[41] Brian, Mitchell and Gulrrajani; Irwin and Porteus (2005)
[42] SCW Concept note guidance

provided a further definition, which included, "Innovation also means inspiration which is the creative process of looking at entrenched problems with fresh eyes; genuine participation of people most affected by a problem to contribute their ideas; use of appropriate partnership models (including working with new or smaller/local partners that you have not worked with before or have not benefitted from donor funding) to deliver approaches that increase learning outcomes for marginalised girls and have a measurable impact"[43]. Innovation in the SCW was scored within different areas of the scoring criteria and did not have a standalone score.

In the IW, innovation was introduced in the call for concept notes when the FM asked applicants to respond to a series of questions about its innovative approaches. These questions included:

- To what extent does this project represent a new and innovative partnership for DFID in education service delivery?
- To what extent does the project involve further support or testing of: i) a new approach or ii) an existing programme that is being altered to respond to the specific demands of educating girls?

At the full application stage for the IW, the FM explained that the GEC Innovation Window was looking specifically for fresh, new approaches and a project's score in the innovation section would contribute the most to the project's overall score. Criteria for scoring innovation included:

- Offering new ways of applying, adapting or developing an existing initiative;
- Applying a proven approach, for the first time, in a particular country or area;
- Developing ideas that come from girls and involving them in project implementation;
- Using different partnership models to work across sectors and improve results - in particular, Payment by Results (PbR) models - and/or finding new partners to deliver approaches that increase learning outcomes for marginalised girls;
- Finding sustainable solutions that lead to long-lasting change; and
- Demonstrating the impact of new and existing innovative models so the results can be shared.[44]

In the IW, innovation held a weighting of 30% in the scoring criteria of concept notes and full applications.

In SPW, innovation was not defined in the call for proposals and the scoring had no specific criteria about innovation[45]. Innovation was expected within SPW, as part of engaging the private sector.

There was no further guidance about innovation after project selection, including no guidance about innovation in the SCW or IW Grant Recipient handbook.

The GEC balanced mitigating risk with sparking innovation.

In the SCW and IW handbook under the approach to risk section, there is the following statement: "DFID and the FM are aware that it is possible that not all ideas, upon implementation, will be proven successful. Therefore Recipients should not avoid mentioning the difficulties they are facing to the Country Coordinator, Portfolio Manager or the Country Monitors"[46].

The GEC successfully engaged the corporate sector on the GEC through the SPW.

Innovation was expected throughout the GEC programme portfolio[47], but was a key feature of the IW and SPW, which were both aimed at engagement with the corporate sector[48] and new partners who do not typically receive donor funding[49].

[43] SCW Guidance for FA_Final
[44] IW_FA_Guidance_for_approval Coffey comments
[45] SP2 Review of final proposals guidance for technical review team
[46] Annex 15b Grant recipient handbook IW and SCW (advanced) p82
[47] GEC Business case v.3 September 2011
[48] GEC Business Case June 2012
[49] GEC Guidance for the Innovation Window Call for Concept Notes

Central management of the GEC through a FM was more effective than other options, but projects would have preferred to have a direct relationship with DFID.

DFID has outsourced the management of some of its grant programmes like the GEC to a fund manager.[50] The role of a fund manager can range from basic financial accountability to capacity building and strategic guidance. On the GEC, a Fund Manager was determined “more effective than in-house management, as specialist staff can be dedicated to tasks and will have the flexibility to handle key issues”. Through this approach, DFID was also expected to have “more strategic vision and oversight of the GEC.”[51] The role of the FM was clearly outlined in GEC Business case[52].

DFID designed the GEC as a centrally funded and managed challenge fund with the understanding that there would be an external fund manager and there would need to be internal coordination among DFID staff. DFID appointed the role of FM to PwC, in alliance with FHI 360, Nathan Associates Ltd and Social Development Direct Ltd. The FM is responsible for day-to-day operation of the GEC and is the point of contact for all grantees.

Central funding of the GEC led to knowledge, network and experience from DFID country offices not always being leveraged.

For DFID, the GEC is managed centrally in the UK by DFID. DFID UK has financial responsibility and contractual oversight for the EM and FM.

The decision to centrally fund the GEC instead of through DFID country offices was made after a bilateral aid review where it was felt that education funding was not ambitious enough. In an options paper to provide more funding to country offices or centrally manage a girls’ education fund, the decision was made to setup a central fund[53].

In the governance structure proposed in the appraisal case, DFID UK and the FM were expected to work closely with DFID country offices to share practices with DFID’s bilateral and multilateral girls’ education programming. [54] In the GEC programme manual, it was expected that DFID country offices have a specific role in reviewing the project concept notes and full applications for the SCW and the IW with their feedback forming part of the formal scoring. The role of DFID country offices after the proposal stage was not clearly identified in the GEC Programme Manual or other GEC documents reviewed. For SPW, DFID country offices would review all eligible Partnership Idea forms as part of the formal feedback.[55]

5.2.2 To what extent did the selection criteria for the SCW projects result in projects starting up quickly and how was this explained?

Selection criteria for SCW projects

The purpose of the SCW, as stated in the GEC business case, was to have a portfolio of projects implemented by well-capacitated and large organizations, which were able to start implementing their designed and tested interventions that would have positive effects on marginalised girls’ learning quickly and effectively.[56]

The guidance for the applicants provided with the concept notes and call for full applications clearly outlined a number of eligibility criteria and conditions for SCW projects and organisations which would allow them to start implementing interventions quickly and effectively. These eligibility criteria included:

- Projects must benefit at least 14,000 marginalised girls over three years;
- Organisations needed to spend the fund within three years; and
- The lead organisation’s average annual turnover/ income over the last three years must exceed the size of the annual funding request by at least 50 per cent. [57]

[50] Bond Survey of DFID outsourced fund management
[51] GEC DFID Business Case p55
[52] GEC Business Case v.3 September 2011
[53] DFID 2
[54] GEC DFID Business case p6
[55] GEC Programme Manual
[56] GEC Business Case June 2012;

Additionally, the application process was designed so SCW projects would need to demonstrate strong organisational capacity to either take an existing education project to scale or to implement an existing model in a different context.

The majority of the selected projects' lead organisations provided evidence that they had a strong track record of implementing large projects (13 out of the 15 projects scored over 80 on the organisation track record)[58], and all of them had previously received DFID funding.[59]

Timeline for SCW projects

The GEC business case, guidance for concept notes and full applications and communications with SCW applicants outlined the timeline that successful SCW projects were expected to follow. The timeline was formalised in the GEC Step Change Grant Recipient Handbook[60], which the FM gave to selected grantees. It stated that projects were expected to:

- Submit M&E Framework within two weeks from project start (understood as date of contract);
- Submit baseline report within three months of project start; and
- Agree on project logframe with FM within 30 days of submitting the baseline report.

5.2.3 What were the strengths and weaknesses of including an Inception Phase for IW projects?

The IW was set up to support innovative projects, to test new approaches to education for marginalised girls, gather evidence around what works and assess the possibility of taking innovations to scale. IW projects were designed to be "small-scale pilot projects". In the GEC appraisal case, it was understood that "if DFID wants to ensure that the GEC is not delivered via the 'usual suspects' – and in particular that the private sector and small, local NGOs are engaged – then the GEC needs the Fund Manager to take an active role in seeking out and supporting the development of the best proposals, rather than passively wait for good proposals to emerge."[61]

The duration of the inception phase was intended to be from projects' signing of AGAs to the approval of baseline reports. While each project could set the length of the period, usually six months were allowed.[62] In December 2013, DFID, based on an options paper presented by the FM, agreed to a Go/No Go final selection stage for IW projects, which would take place after their submission of the baseline report[63]. The Go/No Go decision was based on a final design submission (FDS) document submitted by recipients, which included the baseline report, logframe with targets, activity milestones, and budget for the implementation phase, expenditure report and an update on the project's implementation of financial strengthening measures.[64] At the end of the inception phase, the FM and DFID sought to answer: "Knowing the project and the recipient as we do now, are we confident that the project continues to perform well against the selection criteria for the GEC Innovation Window?"

After reviewing the FDS, the FM provided recommendations to DFID on whether a project should "proceed", "proceed with special conditions added to the AGA/contract" or "not proceed". The final decision was taken by DFID and the Steering Committee. All IW projects received approval to proceed from the inception phase to the implementation phase.

Projects spent the majority of their inception phase improving their M&E with limited work on project design

Activities funded during the inception period were for research and project design only and not for the implementation of project activities.[65] The inception phase was added after the FM identified that projects needed to improve their designs before implementation activities could start, especially through a strong evidence base, finalisation of targets and further work in weaker areas identified at the proposal stage. Projects were not allowed to begin implementation of their project until DFID had made its go/no-go decision.

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58 GEC Steering Committee Report Appendix – Step Change Project Summaries 11 Sep 2012
59 FM- check exact source
60 GEC Step Change Grant Recipient Handbook V1
61 GEC Business case September 2011 v3.
62 Appendix A: Annex 16 GEC IW and SCW Handbook Appendices
63 GEC BAU Programme Manual, v2-v4
64 GEC BAU Programme Manual May 2015 p.30 and Annex 18
65 GEC BAU Programme Manual May 2015

During the inception phase, projects could spend more time in the field consulting with stakeholders and draw on tailored support from the FM and EM. The requirements of the inception phase were as follows: to respond to FM feedback from the review phase, receive approval from the FM on a logframe and M&E framework and conduct a baseline study.[66] The M&E requirements in the inception phase were to appoint an external evaluator, develop and have approved the M&E framework and conduct baseline research.

The inception phase strengthened the quality of baseline research for IW projects

In the inception phase, projects were expected to develop their M&E framework and conduct their baseline research. In the inception phase, applicants had access to handbook guidance, remote support from FM staff, including a pool of technical consultants, in-person support from the EM on their M&E framework and funds to hire their independent evaluator.[67]

The in-person EM support had not been planned initially in the EM ToR. However, given the capacity of IW projects, in-person M&E support was considered as necessary to make sure IW projects had the skills and understanding of M&E for the GEC requirements. As the EM had the technical expertise and resources to conduct this work across the IW countries, teams from the EM led short, intensive verification visits with IW projects in country. The field visits took place between July-October 2013. They provided guidance on their M&E framework data collection processes and reporting structures.

In addition to the visits, the EM and the FM conducted desk-based reviews of M&E frameworks.

The inception phase served as a risk mitigation mechanism for the FM.

Risk has always been higher in the IW given the intention of DFID to fund pilot or innovative projects in this window.[68] Having signed their AGA, IW projects had a budget available for the inception phase. They could hire staff, hold stakeholder consultations and conduct further research.

4.1.4. What lessons have been learnt from the negotiation and partnership approach to working with SPW partners?

In the GEC business case, DFID identified the SPW as a funding window “to develop new ways of meeting the critical success criteria of the GEC with a particular focus on increasing learning opportunities in remote locations through working with international and national companies” and was designed to fund strategic partnerships of up to £15 million with match funding from the private sector. Match-funding was a requirement for SPW to share risk between DFID and the private sector partner and maximise the chance of success.[69]

In the SPW, DFID sought to develop partnerships that were “a mutually beneficial opportunity for the UK government and private sector to collaborate on shared goals”. In the first funding window of SPW, two organisations were contracted. In the second funding window of SPW, one organisation was contracted. After submitting three proposals, Ericsson was also included in the SPW, which brought the SPW portfolio to four projects.

DFID was aware that organisations in the SPW would require a different approach than other windows.[70] However, DFID’s approach for working with the private sector was not made clear in the business case or in official guidance.

When the FM opened the call for proposals for SPW in September 2012, it had more developed guidance and understanding of M&E on the GEC from its experience with the SCW and the IW.

5.3 M&E requirements

5.3.1 How have M&E requirements affected grantees’ capacity to produce rigorously designed, monitored, and evaluated projects?

The DFID Business Case stated that M&E was ‘integral’ to the design of the GEC. A DFID respondent noted that the GEC evaluation was seen as ‘one of the three outcomes of the programme’ and was included in the logframe.

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[66] Appendix A
[67] Annex 16 Appendices
[68] GEC Business Case v. 3 September 2011; FM BAU Programme Manual
[69] GEC Business Case v. 3 September 2011
[70] GEC Business Case v. 3 September 2011

An EM respondent noted that the desire for a robust global evidence base on girls' education was the primary driver for DFID's investment in the scale of the GEC evaluation.

Several EM and FM respondents explained that PbR was seen as central to programme design, and that a robust M&E framework was necessary to underpin PbR requirements. Several FM respondents mentioned that strong M&E was needed should grantees question decisions made to allocate or withhold payments under PbR.

DFID issued a contract to the EM soon after contracting the FM to enable the two organisations to work alongside each other. According to the EM ToRs, "the Evaluation Manager will be contracted to establish and run a rigorous monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness and impact of individual projects and the GEC as a whole, and disseminate lessons to inform GEC design and wider DFID programming".

Further requirements outlined in the EM ToRs included identifying core programme indicators, measuring VfM of individual projects and cost benefit of the programme as a whole, designing a longitudinal study envisioned to follow a cohort of girls for at least ten years, and providing in-country support for projects in ten countries.

The EM finalised their evaluation strategy in 2011 and made it clear that projects would have to do their own evaluations as the EM did not have sufficient budget to conduct robust and representative samples for every project area.

Grant applicants were made aware early in the application process that the GEC had rigorous VfM, M&E and PbR requirements; however these were not explained in detail at the time of the initial call for proposals or in concept notes.[71] Requirements were later clarified through one-to-one communications with applicants and formalised in the Accountable Grant Arrangement (AGA) provisions and the Grant Recipient Handbook.

The GEC business case suggested that individual projects should expect to budget 'an assumed average cost of up to five per cent [for M&E], but this could be significantly higher for small innovative or pilot interventions.'[72] Several FM respondents mentioned that projects significantly under budgeted for M&E activities in their first proposals.

M&E Guidance for SCW and IW projects

The Grant Recipient Handbook contained project M&E requirements, which were similar for SCW and IW projects. SCW projects received the Grant Recipient Handbook after contracting.

According to the Handbook, projects were required to undertake project-level impact evaluations, which demonstrate progress over time, VfM, and additional impact. Each project was required to budget to commission an expert external organisation to undertake a robust independent evaluation of the project with involvement at baseline, midline, and endline. They were also asked to dedicate a member of staff to supervise the evaluation process.

Projects were advised to use a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. They needed to provide data that was sufficiently representative, detailed and accurate for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness, impact and VfM of the project. Projects also were required to collect representative data from both treatment/intervention and control/comparison groups using randomised control trials or quasi-experimental methods. Their sample had to include a representative cohort of beneficiaries to be tracked over the course of the project.

Projects were asked to develop an M&E framework. The FM had to review and approve it prior to projects being given permission to start implementation. The M&E framework needed to provide an overview of the approach and methodology to project M&E, logframe, key evaluation questions, sampling framework, evaluation governance, performance management framework, data collection plan, and plans for baseline study. Projects were required to adopt GEC progamme-level evaluation questions. SCW projects were also required to adopt the household questionnaire used by the EM, while IW projects were permitted to tailor the research questionnaire to fit their project with the approval of the EM.

[71] The SCW call for proposals does not mention monitoring and evaluation requirements. Section 3 asks the project to outline its theory of change, and Section 3.05 asks projects to describe "what evidence exists to show that your project is feasible and your proposed interventions are likely to be successful." SCW Call for Proposals p.6. The IW call for proposals document mentions a unified and independent monitoring & evaluation framework but does not describe the requirements. It does mention that 'expected results', including 'how credible are the predicted results following scale up?' and 'What evidence is there to show that the project could work?' accounts for 20% of the selection criteria.
[72] DFID Business Case v. 3 September 2011

Projects for the SCW and IW were initially given 30 days to submit and finalise their M&E frameworks, including project logframes.[73]

M&E for IW projects

IW projects did not need to demonstrate past success at the time of application. They were asked to integrate M&E into their project design and demonstrate potential for scale-up, lessons learned, and assessable results at programme completion.[74]

An inception phase was built into IW projects "reflecting the need at contracting to further develop project designs before implementation activities could start".[75] One DFID respondent mentioned that the inception period was also designed to cover some of the costs of developing the M&E framework, which might otherwise have left smaller organisations out of pocket. IW projects were assumed to have weak M&E capacity and the FM and EM provided one-to-one support to IW projects, including up to five days' support in-country from the EM.

M&E Guidance for Strategic Partnerships Window

M&E requirements were communicated to the SPW through a series of engagement sessions and detailed in an SPW handbook. Because SPW engagement came later in the process, the window benefitted from M&E guidelines developed for the other windows and some of the lessons learned from engagement with projects in the SCW and IW. An FM respondent noted that time invested into SPW, which included several workshops on logframes and the M&E requirements, paid out. As a result, some SPW applicants realised that they would not be able to fulfil the requirements of the GEC and dropped out of the process early before spending too much time on the application.

Guidelines for the SPW differed from those for the IW and SCW projects, due to differences in the design of the SPW and based on lessons learned from the SCW and IW.

SPW projects were encouraged, but not required to observe and measure impacts during the life of the GEC. They were also encouraged, but not required to use quasi-experimental or experimental methods in their evaluations. SPW projects did not have PbR, but were required to provide at least 50 per cent match funding for their projects.

A DFID respondent noted that DFID needed to manage any tensions that came from the fact that SCW and SPW windows had different requirements.

SPW projects were given three months from contract signing to submit a baseline study report. They were only required to conduct a baseline and a partnership completion report, not a midline.[76]

Payment by results

4.3.1 Rationale for PbR

The GEC Business Case mentions Results Based Financing (RBF), a type of Results Based Payment in which the donor and service providers share the risk of implementation[77], as the recommended Aid Modality for the GEC. In the GEC Business Case the idea was for programme bidders to be "incentivized to use RBF but not mandatory"[78]. The rationale for not making RBF mandatory was because it was "risky as not proven yet to achieve sustainable and systemic change" and "risks target driven programming and exclusion of smaller organisations"[79].

The term "Payment by Results" (PbR) was not used in the GEC Business Case. However, it was used in all remaining programme documents.

Incorporating PbR in GEC was driven by a number of the potential benefits relating to the effective use of UK aid. DFID identified these as[80]:

- Increasing the transparency and accountability of aid

[73] PwC Grant Recipient Handbook, Feb 2015.
[74] DFID Business Case v. 3 September 2011.
[75] GEC BAU Programme Manual May 2015.
[76] PwC Annex 17b Strategic Partnerships 2, November 2014.
[77] http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/pdf/outputs/misc_infocomm/61214-The_Conceptual_Basis_of_Payment_by_Results_FinalReport_P1.pdf
[78] DFID GEC Business Case V4, June 2012.
[79] Ibid
[80] GEC PBR aims and Objectives

- Creating strong incentives for DFID's partners to deliver development results
- Delivering better results for those that UK aid is intended to benefit
- Delivering better value for money, efficiency and clarity on unit costs

Table A1 shows how the benefits will be achieved in each window.

Table A1[81]: PbR Objectives by GEC window

PbR stated objectives and focus in GEC	SCW	IW
Increase accountability and transparency	✓	✓
Incentive for the delivery of better results	✓	✓
Evidence of cost for implementing PbR	✓	-
Delivery of better VfM, efficacy and clarity on unit cost	-	✓
Identify challenges/ lessons learned for implementing PbR for large/ small organization	✓	✓
Identify lessons learned on the implementation of PbR for encouraging innovative solutions to development issues	-	✓

4.3.2 Changes to PbR guidance

In the guidance for full applications, PbR implied that grants would be paid in arrears following an independent verification of pre-agreed results, and that applicants needed to specify outcome indicators on which PbR would be based. The document did not specify how PbR was going to be measured or what implications it would have on projects.

The initial guidance provided in one-on-one support from the FM and EM as well as the Grant Recipient Handbooks provided details on PbR requirements, as follows:

- PbR will be calculated against results achieved on two indicators: learning outcomes and retention (proxied by attendance and enrolment).
- The learning target will be set as the difference between the top 25th percentile performance and the mean for girls in the grade above a given cohort at midline, and two grades above a given cohort at endline.
- Targets will be measured based on an independent evaluation using experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation designs, and spot checks for data reliability.
- Payments will be based using proportionate PbR payment (proportional to the results) or banded PbR payment (ranges of bonus or penalty payment percentages for ranges of delivery of targets).

How has PbR improved value for money for the Step Change Window projects?

At the time of the process review, project midlines had not yet been conducted and outcome level results were unavailable. The process review instead focused on examining the extent to which PbR acted as an incentive for projects to deliver better results, or better value. In the context of GEC, and based on the rationale for PbR as presented in the document "Aims and objectives of PbR", better results and better value can be understood as reaching more targets, reaching the hardest to reach, or achieving better education outcomes.

For SCW projects that are on PbR, learning outcomes form the main metric for payment.[82]

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[81] GEC PBR aims and Objectives
[82] Programme manual Nov 2014

Annex C – Process Review Sample Topic Guide

- Name:
- Position:
- How long have they been involved with GEC, direct and indirect involvement:

1. Design features of the GEC

Target group: marginalization

One of the objectives of the GEC is to reach and benefit marginalised girls.

- **What was the definition**?
- How was it communicated?
- Not defining marginalized girls, was it a **benefit or a limitation to projects?** Why/ how?

In the GEC BC, they mentioned <u>most</u> marginalised girls.

- To what extent do you feel projects **benefit this target group**?

What, if anything, could have been done differently in terms of communicating the target group to applicants?

Innovation

One of the aims of the Challenge Fund was to enable <u>innovation.</u>

- Do you think that the **application process for <u>each of the windows</u> enabled projects to innovate**? **How? Why?**

Flexibility

- To what extent did the GEC enabled projects to take a **flexible approach**?

Fund management

- What were the opportunities or barriers of having the GEC being funded centrally as opposed to DFID country offices?
  - How did it affect relationships with projects?
  - How did it affect timing and management?

And what about having a Fund Manager?

IW - Inception phase

The innovation window had an inception phase prior to contracting. We are interested in hearing about the strengths and weaknesses of the inception phase.

- What was **the rationale of the inception** phase?
- **To what extent and how was the inception phase used** by projects?
- What were **the effects of the inception phase on project designs** (innovation vs. targets and results)?
- What were **the effects of the inception phase on projects M&E**?
- What were **the effects of the two stage contracts** on project design and capacity- How was the go/ no go phase implemented?

SPW: Corporate Sector

- To what extent, has the GEC **reached corporate partners**? What were the **limitations/ challenges and strengths of the approach** to reaching corporate partners?
- How did the **negotiation process lead to designs that represent value for money?**
- How could this **process been better?**
- To what extent did the **SPW leverage international investment** through the private sector?

SCW: Selection Criteria

- Given the selection criteria and the SCW capacity to meet requirements**, to what extent were projects able to start quickly**?
- Did this [expectation] **affect projects design and management? How?**
- What was the effect of **not having an inception phase on SCW projects?**
- What could have **been done for this process**/ stage to go better?

2. M&E

The GEC has very rigorous M&E requirements

- What was the **rationale** for having robust and rigorous M&E?
- How did the **M&E requirements develop and change over** time? How were they **communicated?**
- How did **grantees respond** to the requirements?
- What **support was provided** to each of the windows? Was the **support and resources available appropriate?**
- What effects did the M&E requirements have on **projects design**?
- To what extent did budgeting/ resources for M&E enable projects to **develop rigorous M&E plans?**
- Have projects changed their design **after baseline? Why? How?**
- How has the M&E support process **affected the M&E capacity** of organizations in each of the windows?
    - **What could have been done differently?**
- What has been the effect of M&E requirements on the **wider sector?**

PbR

The intention of PbR was to focus on the scale and quality of projects to deliver. How did **the PbR requirements change over time**? What effects did this have on grantees?

- How and when were the PbR **requirements and guidance communicated to each of the windows**?
- How did grantees in the different windows **understand and respond to PBR?** What were the expectations?

SCW

- How has PbR affected **the scale and quality of results** (quality of design)?
- To what extent did PbR affect the **ability to design an innovative project**/use a pilot project (sharing risk)?
- To what extent did PbR affect **M&E design**, especially in terms of providing evidence, and **allocation of project funding between M&E and implementation**?
- To what extent did PbR affect the **VfM**?

IW

- To what extent have **IW projects adopted PbR**?
- To what extent did IW projects who adopted PbR **adapt their project design (less risky)?**
- To what extent did PbR make projects more **accountable? How?**
- To what extent did PbR act as an **incentive or dis-incentive**?

Other general questions

Anything else about the process that we didn't discuss and you want to raise?

Annex D – List of Documents

Name of document	Author
Project Summaries for SC	PwC
GEC Attendance Guidance	PwC
GEC Case Studies	PwC
GEC Learning guidance v.2.10 September PBR	PwC
GEC Sep 2012 Steering Committee Report	PwC
6616 MC profile	Coffey
6616 MC baseline review	PwC
6616 MC field report	Coffey
6616 MC Full application	MC
8100 ChildFund profile	Coffey
8100 Childfund full application	Childfund
8100 Childfund FDS	Coffey
8100 Childfund field report	Coffey
8100 ChildFund Baseline review	Coffey
5085 BRAC profile	Coffey
5085 BRAC feedback	PwC
5085 BRAC Full application	BRAC
5085 BRAC review	Coffey
5085 BRAC feedback	PwC
5147 AKF project profile	Coffey
5147 AKF Full application	AKF
5147 Baseline review	PwC
5147 AKF M&E feedback	PwC
5274 CARE project profile	Coffey
5274 CARE M&E feedback	Coffey
5274 CARE M&E project feedback	Coffey
5274 CARE baseline review	Coffey
5274 CARE full application	CARE

Name of document	Author
SCW Learning Notes	FM
Assessment of M&E of applications	PwC
120822 Assessment of applications	PwC
GEC Step Change 2013 changes guidance and updates	PwC
SCW Learning notes	PwC
Visio GEC SCW contracting process	FM
PCN Moderation Report	FM
Innovation Window PCNs summaries	FM
6317 Health Limited Full Application	Coffey
6317 HPA profile	Coffey
6317 HPA Baseline review	Coffey
6317 HPA Field report	Coffey
6473 Link profile	Coffey
6473 Link full application	Link
6473 Link baseline review	Coffey
6473 Link field report	Coffey
6567 REK profile	Coffey
6567 full application	REK
6567 baseline review	Coffey
6567 REK field report	Coffey
6627 LCD Full application	LCD
6627 LCD baseline review	Coffey
6627 LCD profile	Coffey
6627 LCD field report	Coffey
6627 LCD evaluability assessment	Coffey
7133 RV field report	Coffey
7133 RV profile	Coffey
7133 RV baseline review	Coffey
7133 RV full application	RV
7133 RV FDS	Coffey

Name of document	Author
8329 TFAC profile	Coffey
8329 TFAC full application	TFAC
8329 TFAC FDS	Coffey
8329 TFAC Field visit	Coffey
8329 TFAC Baseline review	Coffey
IW RAG Rating Review 20120305	Coffey
IW project summaries	PwC
IW PCN moderation report	FM
IW PCN summaries	FM
7038 VSO baseline review	Coffey
7038 VSO full application	VSO
7038 VSO field report	Coffey
7038 profile	Coffey
7038 VSO baseline review	Coffey
7549 EF profile	Coffey
7549 EF field report	Coffey
7549 EF baseline review	Coffey
7549 EF full application	EF
7549 EF evaluability assessment CB	Coffey
7549 EF evaluability assessment RB	Coffey
Subcommittee Report on SPW	PwC
5096 Plan profile	Coffey
5096 Plan feedback	Coffey
5096 Plan full application	Plan
5096 Plan baseline review	Coffey
5099 STC full application	STC
5099 STC M&E feedback	PwC
5099 STC profile	Coffey
5099 STC M&E final	Coffey
5099 STC baseline review	PwC

Name of document	Author
5101 Camfed profile	Coffey
5101 Camfed M&E feedback	PwC
5101 Camfed full application	Camfed
5101 Camfed project feedback	PwC
5101 Baseline review	Coffey
5136 WUSC profile	Coffey
5136 WUSC M&E feedback	PwC
5136 WUSC application	WUSC
5136 WUSC M&E project feedback	PwC
150121 Annual Review Template Pack Link Ethiopia	Link
Q7 Annual Review in country EFA	PwC
Q7 Annual review in country RV	PwC
GEC Programme manual 140912	PwC
GEC Programme manual March 2013	PwC
Annex 1 GEC in country working entry gate checklist	PwC
Annex 2 GEC expense policy global	PwC
Annex 3 GEC PMO Manual	PwC
Annex 4 GEC Child protection policy	PwC
Annex 5 GEC Operating in High risk environments	PwC
Annex 6 GEC IATI Discussion Paper	PwC
Annex 21 GEC Corporate Social environment response	PwC
GEC BAU Programme Manual Nov 2013	PwC
Annex 1 entry gate process	PwC
Annex 10 GEC communication strategy	PwC
Annex 11 Stakeholder map	PwC
Annex 12 GEC guidelines for communication	PwC
Annex 13 GEC templates	PwC
Annex 14 GEC strategy for lessons learned and dissemination	PwC
Annex 15a grant recipient handbook IW SCW April 2014	PwC
Annex 16 Grant recipient handbook with appendices	PwC

Name of document	Author
Annex 17 SPW handbook	PwC
Annex 18 Options paper for go no go	PwC
Annex 19 GEC monitor guidance	PwC
Annex 2 GEC expense policy global April 2014	PwC
Annex 21 GEC Corporate Social and Environmental Responsibility	PwC
Annex 22 IW logframe guidance	PwC
Annex 23 GEC PbR in the IW	PwC
Annex 24 GEC Measuring outcomes vs. PbR	PwC
Annex 25 GEC IW Baseline template	PwC
Annex 26 GEC Due diligence Approach paper	PwC
Annex 27 GEC Finance and Contracts process maps	PwC
Annex 28 Maximising results paper	PwC
GEC IW M&E Framework Template	PwC
Annex 3 PMO Manual	PwC
Annex 4 GEC Child protection policy April 2014	PwC
Annex 5 Working in high risk environments	PwC
Annex 6 Misuse of funds	PwC
Annex 7 Draft DNH policy	PwC
Annex 8 GEC IATI Discussion paper	PwC
Annex 9 GEC incident Whistleblowing	PwC
GEC BAU Programme Manual April 2014	PwC
Annex 1 entry gate process NOV 2014	PwC
Annex 10 GEC communication strategy	PwC
Annex 11 Stakeholder map	PwC
Annex 12a GEC guidelines for communication	PwC
Annex 12B comms guidance WebEx presentation July 2015	PwC
Annex12c Strategic partnerships communications protocol	PwC
Annex 13 GEC templates	PwC
Annex 14 GEC strategy for lessons learned and dissemination	PwC
Annex 15a grant recipient handbook IW SCW April 2014	PwC

Name of document	Author
Annex 15b Grant recipient handbook advanced	PwC
Annex 16 Grant recipient handbook with appendices	PwC
Annex 17a SPW handbook	PwC
Annex 17b SPW 2 handbook	PwC
Annex 17b handbook section 5 contract management	PwC
Annex 18 Options paper for go no go	PwC
Annex 19 GEC monitor guidance	PwC
Annex 2 GEC expense policy global	PwC
Annex 20 PST options paper	PwC
Annex 21 GEC IW M&E framework template	PwC
Annex 22 GEC IW logframe guidance	PwC
Annex 23 Measuring outcomes and PbR template guidance	PwC
Annex 24 GEC IW baseline template	PwC
Annex 25 Approach to due diligence and managing fiduciary risk	PwC
Annex 26 GEC finance and contracting processes	PwC
Annex 27 Maximising results paper	PwC
Annex 28 GEC CSR standards	PwC
Annex 3 PMO Manual	PwC
Annex 4 GEC Child protection policy April 2014	PwC
Annex 5 Working in high risk environments	PwC
Annex 6 Misuse of funds	PwC
Annex 7 GEC do no harm policy	PwC
Annex 8 GEC IATI Discussion paper	PwC
Annex 9 GEC incident Whistleblowing	PwC
GEC BAU Programme Manual November 2014	PwC
GEC IW and SCW Handbook Appendices February 2015	PwC
Grant recipient handbook advanced February 2015	PwC
Grant recipient handbook arrears February 2015	PwC
GEC BAU programme manual may 2015	PwC
120920 GEC and PBR - aims and objectives DFID	DFID

Name of document	Author
GEC Annual Review	DFID
Concept note request for financial support from the Girls' Education Challenge Window 1: Step Change projects	PwC
GEC Guidance - Step Change Window Guidance for FA_FINAL	PwC
GEC IW call for concept notes	PwC
GEC step change window FAQs	PwC
Guidance to applicants submitting a Full Application for the Innovation Window	PwC
The Girls' Education Challenge - Full Application Form for the Step Change Window	PwC
Project Status Tracker - timelines	PwC
SPW SP Strategic Consultation final	PwC
Summary of GEC Project Support against IOE Review Typology	PwC
060314 Projects Intervention areas	PwC
Annual Review 2015 Pack	PwC
Q7 Annual Review - in-country - 7133- Raising Voices	PwC
Q7 Annual Review - in-country - 7549 – Eco-Fuel Africa Limited	PwC
140407 GEC Baseline timeline	PwC
20131105 - SP2 - review of final proposals - guidance for technical review team - v2	PwC
20131129 - SP2 - agenda for internal moderation	PwC
20131204 - SP2 - report for DFID moderation - final	PwC
GEC Logframe Template for Applicants	PwC
GEC Budget Template for Applicants	PwC
GEC Work Plan template	PwC
140414 Project Status Tracker	PwC
140519 GEC Baseline timeline	PwC
Additional Guidance - DFID Logframe How to Note	DFID
Additional Guidance - DFID_Approach to VfM	DFID
Additional Guidance - ICAI_Approach to Effectiveness and VfM	DFID
GEC Full Application Form for the Innovation Window - confidential information sheet	PwC

Name of document	Author
GEC IW Full Application form	PwC
GEC Tool - PbR Design Tool_FINAL	PwC
Innovation Window Guidance for Applicants	PwC
GEC – A Project Selection Process	PwC
Step Change PCN Scoring process	PwC
150121 Annual Review Template Pack Link Ethiopia	Link
5147 AKF Q1+2,3,4,5,6,7,8 Narrative Reports AKFUK	AKF
STAGES - CRS AKES Q5 QMF- Quarterly Monitoring Framework	AKF
STAGES- PMU- AKF QFM Q6-Quarterly Monitoring Framework	AKF
5085 Qtr. 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 Report- GEC AFG BRAC	BRAC
BRAC Q1,2,3,4,5,6,7 QMF	BRAC
CARE Qtr. 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 Reports SOMGEP	CARE
CARE Quarterly Monitoring Framework- Q1,2,3,4,5,6,7	CARE
CFA Qtr. 1,2,3,4,5,6 Reports	CFA
ReK Qtr. 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 Reports	ReK
ReK QMF 6,7,8	ReK
Fund Manager's recommendation at close of the inception phase- HL	PwC
Fund Manager's recommendation at close of the inception phase- Link	PwC
Fund Manager's recommendation at close of the inception phase- ReK	PwC
Fund Manager's recommendation at close of the inception phase- Mercy Corps	PwC
Fund Manager's recommendation at close of the inception phase- LCD	PwC
Fund Manager's recommendation at close of theinception phase- VSO Moz	PwC
Fund Manager's recommendation at close of the inception phase- GEMS	PwC
Fund Manager's recommendation at close of the inception phase- FDS	PwC
Fund Manager's recommendation at close of the inception phase- Eco Fuel	PwC

Name of document	Author
Fund Manager's recommendation at close of the inception phase- Child Fund	PwC
Fund Manager's recommendation at close of the inception phase- TFC	PwC
AKF Baseline report feedback	PwC
ENGINE AKF Baseline report feedback	PwC
Eco fuel Baseline report feedback	PwC
Camfed Baseline report feedback	PwC
LCD AKF Baseline report feedback	PwC
PLAN Baseline report feedback	PwC
Raising Voices Baseline report feedback	PwC
ReK Baseline report feedback	PwC
TfAC Baseline report feedback	PwC
VSO Baseline report feedback	PwC
BOND_Executive summary of the survey of DFID fund managed grantees	BOND
GEC Survey March 2014 – Results	PwC
SPW About Strategic Partnerships	PwC
Press release- The Coca Cola company and the UK government strengthen girls' education and economic opportunities in Nigeria	DFID
Press release- Discovery Communications teams up with UK government to give girls an education	DFID
Strategic Partnerships – Second funding round Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)	PwC
EPS PEAKS- Meeting the Challenge	Brain Mitchell Gulrajani
Understanding Challenge Funds	C Pompa- ODI
SPW- Subcommittee Report	
DFID GEC Business Case and Summary June 2012 V4	DFID
DFID GEC Business Case and Summary Sep 2011 V3	DFID
Terms of Reference for the Evaluation Manager of the Girls Education Challenge Fund (GEC)	DFID
Visio-GEC SCW Contracting Process For Applicants V.7	PwC

Annex E – List of Stakeholders Interviewed

Organisation	Person interviewed	Role	Type of stakeholder
PWC	David Armstrong	GEC Lead. Partner	FM
PWC	Jason Calvert	M&E Lead	FM
PWC	Kristen Kirkwood	SCW Lead	FM
PWC	Darren Pigg	M&E Lead	FM
PWC	Joe Holden	Deputy M&E Lead	FM
PWC	Bethan Grillo	Private Sector and Stakeholder Lead	FM
PWC	Kerry Symeonidis	Leading the IW	FM
PwC	Christine Wallace	Lead	FM
DFID	Paul Atherton	Evaluation Advisor	Donor
DFID	Caroline Halls	Evaluation Advisor	Donor
DFID	Sally Gear	Programme Lead, Senior Education Advisor	Donor
Coffey	Timothy Reilly	Evaluation Project Manager	EM
Coffey	Simon Griffiths	EM Team Leader	EM
AKDN	Acting M&E and head of Project Management Unit-	Alison Oswald	SCW
CARE	Project Manager	Gure Abdifarhan Farah	SCW
CARE	Monitoring and knowledge management	Mohammad Hassan	SCW
Camfed	Previous Head of Impact, Present National Director	Faith Nkala	SCW
Save the Children	Project Director	Mark Thorpe	SCW
IRC	Director of finance and compliance	Teferab	SCW
IRC	Finance controller for IRC/DRC finance	Jules	SCW
IRC	M&E coordinator	July	SCW
IRC	Education technical advisor	Maurice	SCW
LINK	Programme Director at Link Community	Laura Garforth	IW
GEMS	Project Director	Gordon Carver	IW
EcoFuel	CEO of EcoFuel	Sanga Moses	IW

Organisation	Person interviewed	Role	Type of stakeholder
Leonard Cheshire Kenya	Monitoring, Evaluation, learning and Reporting manager	Sammy Fwaga	IW
Raising Voices	Programme Manager	Olivia	IW
Raising Voices	Learning Coordinator	Sophie Namy	IW
Mercy Corps	Programme Manager	Louise Shah	IW
TFAC	Programme Manager	Joanna Seth-Smith	IW
RedInKind	M&E officer	Geert de Jong	IW
VSO	Grant Officer	Ivete	IW
Ericsson	Programme Director for Global education initiative	Zohra Yormecha	SPW
Coca Cola	Manages all 5 x 20 projects	Dorcas Onyango	SPW
Coca-cola	Programme manager- Mercy Corps	Rabi Sani	SPW