
Leave No Girl Behind – Concept Note stage

Guidance for applicants

November 2016

This paper covers a range of technical, eligibility and other guidance, and **should be read by all applicants before completing the Leave No Girl Behind (LNGB) Concept Note form.**

Fuller guidance on key areas will be provided at Full Proposal stage.

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Glossary

Intervention	A LNGB project can comprise of several discrete interventions; these may be actions or systems that are put in place to achieve a desired outcome.
Project	An overall 'programme' of activities undertaken by your team and implementers on the ground is referred to holistically as a 'project'.
Out-of-school (OOS)	OOS refers to girls who have never been to school and those who have dropped out without gaining a basic education.
Target beneficiaries	Target beneficiaries are the children that you are working to affect. They can be referred to in number and are defined by the characteristics specified by the GEC.
Literacy and numeracy	Literacy – the ability to read and write in one's native language Numeracy - the ability to understand and work with numbers.

1. Overview of the Leave No Girl Behind funding window

1.1 Purpose and context

Gender inequalities in education are greatest in the poorest countries amongst the poorest wealth quintiles, and widen during adolescence. Adolescent girls face specific challenges to staying in school and learning. In many contexts, as girls approach puberty, their opportunities can shrink compared to those of their brothers', underpinned by harmful gender norms which may impose restrictions on their mobility. Girls and young women also face a disproportionate burden of domestic work, and face greater risk of violence, including sexual violence.

DFID's Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) was launched in 2012, aiming to support over a million of the world's poorest girls to improve their lives through education. The GEC supports initiatives which aim to find better ways of getting girls into school and ensuring they receive a quality of education to transform their future. The GEC was extended in July 2016.

PwC (in consortium with other organisations) is the appointed Fund Manager for the GEC, responsible for administering, monitoring and documenting the results and learning from the GEC's portfolio of projects.

Leave No Girl Behind (LNGB) is a new funding window under the GEC, announced in July 2016. This initiative will support interventions for highly marginalised, adolescent girls who are out of school (either because they have never attended school, or have already dropped out of school without gaining a basic education) to (re-) enrol in education, gain employment or improve the quality of their family lives. In order to achieve this interventions should be **focused on the acquisition of basic education and skills, tackling social and gender norms, and testing sustainable solutions that can provide systemic change**. The LNGB window is supported by additional funding (i.e. additional to the existing fund).

This funding window is open to organisations who can develop new and innovative solutions, and to those who wish to scale up and adapt successful existing interventions to deliver quality education and skills to out-of-school adolescent girls.

1.2 Objectives

The overall objective of the LNGB funding window is to support out-of-school adolescent girls, aged between 10 and 19, who have dropped out of or never attended school, into education, employment or to gain skills relevant for improving quality of their family lives.

In doing so, the LNGB funding window aims to:

1. Improve girls' literacy, numeracy and other skills relevant for life and work
2. Empower adolescent girls and tackle harmful social and gender norms that contribute to girls being out of school
3. Test sustainable solutions (including new partnerships, for example with private sector, local organisations, government departments) that will last beyond DFID funding
4. Conduct a thorough evaluation of interventions to understand what works, and how future policies and programmes can be better designed to include and support marginalised girls

In line with these objectives, proposals should demonstrate:

- *A strong focus on accelerating girls' learning outcomes* so that marginalised girls who have been left behind can catch up and acquire relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for life and work.
- *A systematic approach to addressing the causes and impact of school dropout and non-enrolment during adolescence*, including tackling community attitudes and harmful social and gender norms such as child marriage, early pregnancy, forced domestic work, or violence.
- *A deepening of engagement and partnership* with the private sector, partner governments, civil society and other donors to sustain and scale up cost effective GEC innovations beyond the lifetime of the programme.

The window will support a wide range of interventions which present locally appropriate and innovative solutions to the persistent needs of out of school girls, for example: catch-up clubs, mentoring and life-skills and other training programmes, as well as technology-based solutions that may improve learning and lead to better employment options.

1.3 Target beneficiaries

Proposals should support girls aged between 10 and 19, who are located in one of the countries where DFID works (see below), and who are:

- **Out of school** (girls who have never attended or have dropped out of school without gaining a basic education); and
- **Highly marginalised** (girls who fall within the definitions of category 2 or 3 marginalisation below).

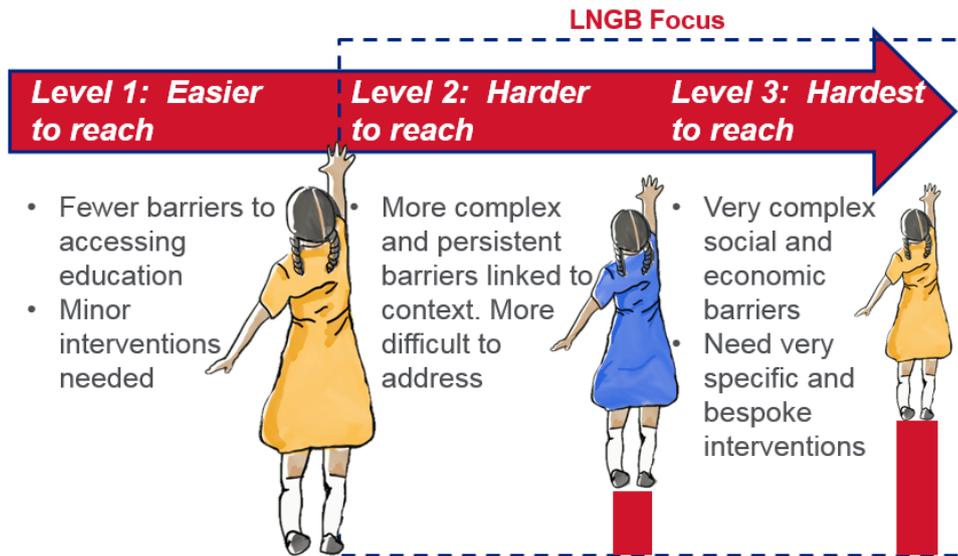
Target beneficiaries might be out of school for a number of reasons, for example:

- they are married, or pregnant / young mothers
- they are from a particular ethnic or social group
- they may have significant responsibilities at home e.g. they are the head of household, have a high domestic chore burden or are carers to sick parents or siblings
- they have been affected by conflict or they live in IDP or refugee camps
- they are from pastoralist communities
- they are engaged in child labour¹
- they are disabled or affected by a long-term illness.

¹ Child labour as defined by ILO as work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children and interferes with their schooling by:

- depriving them of the opportunity to attend school
- obliging them to leave school prematurely
- requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

LNGB is intended to target the most marginalised girls who are hardest to reach



The LNGB window aims to target highly marginalised girls which can be described under the GEC marginalisation Levels 2 and 3:

GEC marginalisation category	Profile and context of LNGB girls	Needs
Level 2: marginalised – harder to reach	<p>Girls age 10-19 who have dropped out of school and have insufficient functional literacy and numeracy skills to enable them to transition to secondary school, TVET, work or adulthood. Girls in this category may have had limited or intermittent access to school because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they are from pastoralist communities • they have been affected by conflict, • they may have significant responsibilities at home because they are the head of household or have to help parents with domestic chores, • they are pregnant or have become young mothers, or • they may have been subject to child, early or forced marriage 	<p>Activities and services that support the inclusion of groups of children with less complex access or learning needs into mainstream education.</p>
Level 3: extremely marginalised – hardest to reach	<p>Girls age 10-19 who have never accessed formal education or who do not have basic literacy and numeracy skills. Their lack of education hampers their ability to lead healthy, productive lives. Girls in this category may have never accessed formal education because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is no school within reach because of lack of education infrastructure or no accessibility due to insecurity • they are homeless • they live in IDP or refugee camps 	<p>Activities and services which support children with more complex access and learning needs, which may involve individualised support or significant adaptation of</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they are engaged in child labour • they are disabled or affected by a long-term illness • they are married, or pregnant/ young mothers under age 18 	mainstream educational provision.
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1.4 Target countries

Target beneficiaries will be living in environments where negative gender and social norms, stigma or conflict may restrict mobility and access to education for all or particular groups of girls. These may be in geographic areas where there are high numbers of out of school girls or girls who have never been to school, or where particular groups of girls are excluded because of their group identity or a particular characteristic e.g. young mothers.

Projects can be implemented in any country where DFID has a presence. If you are unsure as to whether your selected country is an eligible country, at the first instance please refer to the DFID website (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-development/about>) for up to date information.

In addition, we welcome applications from projects proposing to work in countries where DFID is supporting activities (e.g. with displaced populations) but may not necessarily have a presence. If you are unsure as to whether your selected country is an eligible country, please use the query function embedded in the Application Form in the first instance (or, if this is difficult, then contact girlseducationchallenge@uk.pwc.com (with 'LNGB – eligible country query') in the subject line). Applicants should indicate specific countries and the Fund Manager will facilitate a decision with DFID on such countries.

2. Application and selection process

The LNGB funding windows will involve a two-stage application process:

1. **Concept Note stage:** the first step is the submission of a Concept Note, setting out the project idea proposed for funding. The Fund Manager will assess eligibility and overall fit with LNGB criteria. Following a recommendation by the Fund Manager, DFID will decide which Concept Notes will move forward to the next stage.
2. **Full Proposal stage:** the Fund Manager will invite shortlisted applicants to submit a Full Proposal, which will involve more specific and detailed information (including a budget, results framework and high-level project plan). This will be used to further shortlist applicants and recommend projects for funding to DFID, with the ultimate decision being made by DFID.

Applicants are requested to note the following:

1. **This is a competitive funding window and not everyone will be successful.** We expect that we will receive many applications and that competition for funding will be high. Please think about your application carefully, take note of the LNGB's eligibility and evaluation criteria, and document clearly why your project should receive support. Please note that your application will be assessed solely on the information submitted in your Concept Note. Therefore, please ensure you fully answer all the questions included in all sections of the Concept Note form and do not assume that the Concept Note reviewers will use any additional information on your organisation/consortium, the target girls or the proposed project.

2. **Submission of Round 1 Concept Notes.** All Concept Notes must be submitted through the LNGB portal by 5pm (GMT) on 20 December 2016. The Concept Note must be completed using Arial font size 10 and be in English. Concept Notes received after this deadline will not be accepted.

For projects with unavoidable issues using the portal, we will also consider accepting applications by email (to girsleducationchallenge@uk.pwc.com), but this will be on an exceptional basis. If you have received confirmation from the portal that your application has been submitted successfully on the portal, please do **NOT** send your application by email.

We will acknowledge all Concept Notes received within three working days of the deadline.

3. **Number of Concept Notes submitted per organisation.** There is no limit on the number of Concept Notes each organisation can submit. We encourage that organisations consolidate ideas where possible (e.g. same idea being implemented across multiple countries). Separate Concept Notes should only be submitted where ideas are radically different or need to be assessed separately.
4. **Communication during the application period.** The Fund Manager will be accessible to provide guidance for all applicants through the Concept Note and Full Proposal process. This will **ONLY** be through responding to queries (including through Frequently Asked Questions) and issuing standard guidance, which will be made available on DFID's website and the LNGB portal.

All questions relating to the contents of this Concept Note are to be submitted through the query function in the Application Form in the first instance (or, if you have difficulty with this, then by email – please contact girsleducationchallenge@uk.pwc.com (with 'LNGB – Concept Note general query') in the subject line). The Fund Manager will respond to all reasonable requests for clarification as soon as reasonably possible. Please note that questions submitted less than three working days before the due date for Concept Note submissions will **not** receive a response.

Responses will be published on the LNGB portal or circulated via FAQs email to all applicants.

5. **We anticipate there will be two funding rounds for the LNGB window.** The second funding window is estimated to open in the second half of 2017. The eligibility and evaluation criteria for the second funding round may be different to this funding round. Applicants from the first funding round will be eligible to apply for the second funding round.
6. **Approval decisions.** DFID will decide which Concept Notes move forward to the next stage, and which applications will ultimately receive funding from the GEC, based on the Fund Manager's recommendations.
7. **Notification of decision.** The Fund Manager will notify both successful and unsuccessful applicants. The Fund Manager will endeavour to do so according to the timelines below, although recognises that delays may occur. Due to the volume of applications expected, feedback will not be provided to unsuccessful applicants.

Table 1: Expected timetable for the LNGB funding window (Round 1)

<i>Application process stage</i>	<i>Indicative timing</i>
Call for Concept Notes opened	15 November 2016
Deadline for submission of Concept Notes	5pm (GMT) on 20 December 2016
Concept Note applicants (successful and unsuccessful) notified of decisions	Late February 2017
Call for Full Proposals opened	25 February 2017
Workshops for successful Concept Note applicants (TBC)	March 2017
Deadline for submission of Full Proposals	13 April 2017
Full Proposal applicants (successful and unsuccessful) notified of decisions	May/June 2017
Due diligence and contracting process commences with successful applicants	May/June 2017
Earliest project start date	September 2017

8. Conditions of application and selection process

- *Openness and transparency:* All Concept Notes should demonstrate openness, transparency, attention to detail and the ability to work in the spirit of collaborative working.
- *Tender documentation:* If an applicant fails to provide the required information or fails to supply documentation referred to in their Concept Note, the Fund Manager may make further requests to the applicant for the required information. If this is not supplied in the given time, or is unsatisfactory, the Fund Manager may treat the response as a non-compliant response and it will therefore score zero and this will be taken into account during the evaluation process.
- *Cost of application:* The Fund Manager and DFID shall not, under any circumstances, be liable for any costs incurred by the applicant in relation to their participation in this application and selection process or otherwise.
- *Conflict of interest:* Applicants are instructed to ensure that their potential appointment as grantees has not and will not create any conflict of interest or any situation that might compromise or prejudice the Fund Manager's or DFID's duty to manage an open, fair, non-discriminatory and competitive procurement process. In the event of a conflict (or potential conflict) arising at any time during the application and selection process, the affected applicant shall be responsible for reporting the occurrence of potential or actual conflict and the means for resolving it to the Fund Manager forthwith. In the absence of any compelling reason acceptable to the Fund Manager, the assumption will be that the conflicted party shall have no further involvement in the process.
- *Security of information:* Applicants should be aware that any contract awarded for this procurement will require the successful applicants to accept DFID's standard Terms and Conditions (unless adjusted by DFID to suit the specific procurement).

3. Eligibility criteria

All Concept Notes will be reviewed against the eligibility criteria (financial and non-financial) before they are scored in more detail. The eligibility review is a pass/fail test, and an applicant that fails to meet any one criteria within this section will be automatically disqualified and not be shortlisted to the evaluation phase.

We welcome applications from individual organisations, or consortia, representing the not-for-profit and private sectors. The eligibility criteria for the Leave No Girl Behind window are summarised in the table below, with accompanying explanations.

Table 2: Eligibility criteria for LNGB Funding Window (Round 1)

Eligibility criteria	Comments
<i>Type of applicant</i>	<p>Only non-state organisations, including both not-for-profit and for-profit organisations, may apply. Not-for-profit organisations do not have to be registered charities.</p> <p>We will not consider applications from governmental organisations. We will accept applications from UN organisations, although as with all applications, these organisations will need to comply with GEC contracting requirements if successful.</p> <p>We also cannot consider applications from any organisation that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages activities which may lead to civil unrest; • Is linked to any terrorist organisations; or • Discriminates against any groups or individuals on the basis of gender, age, disability, race, colour, ethnicity, sexual orientation, political opinions or religion; and/or • Participates in or encourages activities involving modern slavery, exploitation or compulsory labour (including in respect of children)
<i>Countries</i>	<p>Projects can be implemented in any country where DFID has a presence. If you are unsure as to whether your selected country is an eligible country, at the first instance please refer to the DFID website (https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-development/about) for up to date information.</p> <p>In addition, we welcome applications from projects proposing to work in countries where DFID is supporting activities (e.g. with displaced populations) but may not necessarily have a presence. If you are unsure as to whether your selected country is an eligible country, please use the query function embedded in the Application Form in the first instance (or, if this is difficult, then contact girlseducationchallenge@uk.pwc.com (with 'LNGB – eligible country query') in the subject line). Applicants should indicate specific countries and the Fund Manager will facilitate a decision with DFID on such countries.</p>
<i>Extent of financial support</i>	<p>There is a £100,000 minimum threshold for total financial support requested for any one project. Applicants should request an amount that is reasonable, given their project context and activities. If the financial support required for an applicant falls below the £100,000</p>

	<p>threshold, the applicant should consider joining a consortium to meet the minimum threshold.</p> <p>The lead organisation's average annual turnover (averaged over the last 3 years) should exceed the size of the annual funding request by at least 50%.</p> <p>Different funding brackets are specified in the Concept Note form, and projects are asked to select the funding bracket their project will fall within.</p>
<i>Project timeframe</i>	<p>We expect that projects will commence activities in the second half of 2017.</p> <p>Project concepts should cover a duration that is reasonable and necessary to achieve the objective of supporting your specific beneficiaries to transition into education, employment or gain skills relevant for improving quality of their family lives.</p> <p>Projects may work with specific cohort of girls for a short time and add new cohorts subsequently. Therefore, the total project timeframe may cover a number of years but it is not envisaged that projects will work with the same girls for a very long period.</p>
<i>Target beneficiaries</i>	<p>There is no overall minimum or maximum number of beneficiaries that should be targeted for any one project.</p> <p>Different beneficiary number brackets are specified in the Concept Note form, and projects are asked to select the bracket they fall within.</p>
<i>Concept Note</i>	<p>The applicant must submit a fully completed Concept Note form by the stipulated deadline, and supply all the required accompanying documentation.</p>

3.1 Consortium Applications

We welcome consortium applications from not-for-profit and for-profit organisations. For all proposed consortiums, the roles of each partner and their contribution to the delivery of the project must be clearly defined. Each consortium will only need to submit one Concept Note per idea, clearly stating the lead organisation. The lead organisation must be clearly specified, with the lead organisation being prepared to enter into a contractual relationship with DFID.

Organisations may apply for both individual and consortium projects at the same time. There is no limit on the number of Concept Notes each organisation can submit. We encourage that organisations consolidate ideas where possible (e.g. same project across multiple countries).

4. Evaluation criteria

Each project proposal will be reviewed against the evaluation criteria outlined below, at the Concept Note stage.

The overall criteria and weightings will remain the same at the Full Proposal stage, although the relevant questions may change, based on the level of detail required at the Full Proposal stage.

At both stages, technical aspects will total 65% and commercial aspects will total 35% of the overall score.

Table 3: Evaluation criteria for the Leave No Girl Behind Window

Criteria	Relevant questions
TECHNICAL CRITERIA = 65%	
Proposed project team track record & capacity (15%)	Applicants should demonstrate sufficient capacity (at the consortium or individual organisation level) to deliver this project
	Applicants should showcase strong and relevant experience of the proposed team and organisation (lead organisation and partners, if applicable) in delivering the proposed project
	Applicants should include any relevant previous experience of implementing projects of similar nature and/or size
Targeted girls (5%)	Applicants must clearly articulate the number of beneficiaries targeted, their level of marginalisation and needs
Expected Results, ToC and design (20%)	Applicants should demonstrate the change for targeted girls as a direct result of this project and outline how significant and feasible the impact the project will have on the girls' learning and on the transition to education, employment or training, or to otherwise contribute to improving quality of their family lives
	Applicants should elaborate how well the proposed project's activities link to the outcomes of learning and transition to education, employment or training, or improved quality of their family lives
	Applicants should consider the feasibility of the number of proposed targeted beneficiaries in relation to the project approach, proposed financial support and time frame requested
	Applicants should showcase a good understanding of the context of marginalised, adolescent girls in relevant country (ies) and how the project aims to support adolescent girls in this context and abides to the do no harm principle
	Applicants should demonstrate evidence to show that the proposed project could work
	Where appropriate other groups might benefit from this project (direct or indirect), applicants should include other groups than marginalised girls (e.g. teachers, families, boys, communities)
	Applicants should provide sufficient evidence that the proposed project meets an unmet demand or is genuinely 'additional' – complementing existing state and donor interventions, rather than overlapping with them.

Criteria	Relevant questions
Innovation (5%)	Applicants should indicate how their proposed project aims to use innovative approaches to deliver results in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increasing the inclusion of highly marginalised girls in school and education - increasing the learning outcomes (literacy and numeracy) of marginalised adolescent girls - increasing transition to employment (including self-employment) - delivering skills that are relevant for improving quality of their family lives
Sustainability (10%)	Applicants should include the likelihood that the proposed project could be scaled or replicated, either in this context or other contexts
	Applicants should exhibit a strong understanding of sustainable change and how the proposed project will achieve this (where the proposed project will not be fully sustainable by the end of the LNGB programme, components of the project that could be sustainable is highlighted)
	Applicants should detail the likelihood of the project receiving endorsement and/or other support from the relevant state authorities
Tracking and evaluation (10%)	Applicants should outline the robustness of proposed plans to monitor and evaluate the project
COMMERCIAL CRITERIA = 35%	
VfM (25%)	The Fund Manager will perform an initial assessment of VfM based on the level of funding requested; the level of impact; the proposed number of beneficiaries and the level of marginalisation
	Where applicable, applicants should indicate if any match funding (in cash or in kind) will be provided by the applicant or income generated for exclusive use by the project
Risk and mitigation (10%)	Applicants should demonstrate a strong understanding of the specific challenges and risks in the relevant context

Responses to project concept questions in the Concept Note form will be scored based on the scoring system below:

Table 4: Scoring system for applications

Scoring system	
3 points	Excellent response The panel believes that the proposed concept offered fully meet the requirements of the specification. The response fully addresses how the project offered will be able to meet the aims of the LNGB campaign.
2 points	Good response The panel believes that the proposed concept offered sufficiently meet the requirements of the specification. The response sufficiently addresses how the proposed project will be able to meet the aims of the LNGB campaign.
1 point	Adequate response The panel believes that the proposed concept is to meet most the minimum requirements of the specification. The response addresses how the proposed project will be able to meet the minimum requirements of the LNGB campaign.
0 point	Unacceptable response The panel believes that the proposed concept offered are unable to be delivered in accordance with the specification. The response does not address, to an acceptable standard, how the proposed project will be able to meet the minimum requirements of the LNGB campaign.

5. Detailed Guidance

5.1 Expected Impact

All LNGB projects will contribute to one or more of the following core impacts:

- Girls (re-) enrol in education: for example girls enrolled in formal primary, secondary or tertiary education programmes;
- Girls gain employment: for example girls employed either formally, informally or self-employment; or
- Girls improve the quality of their family lives: for example girls are better able to participate in decision making relating to their family or community.

5.2 Expected Outcomes

All LNGB projects will contribute to the following core outcomes:

- Out of school (OOS) girls age 10-19 gain literacy and numeracy skills, and vocational and life skills²;
- New evidence base is established on what works to reach out of school girls and support their transition into adulthood; and
- Education policies actively include OOS girls and systems are able to meet their needs;

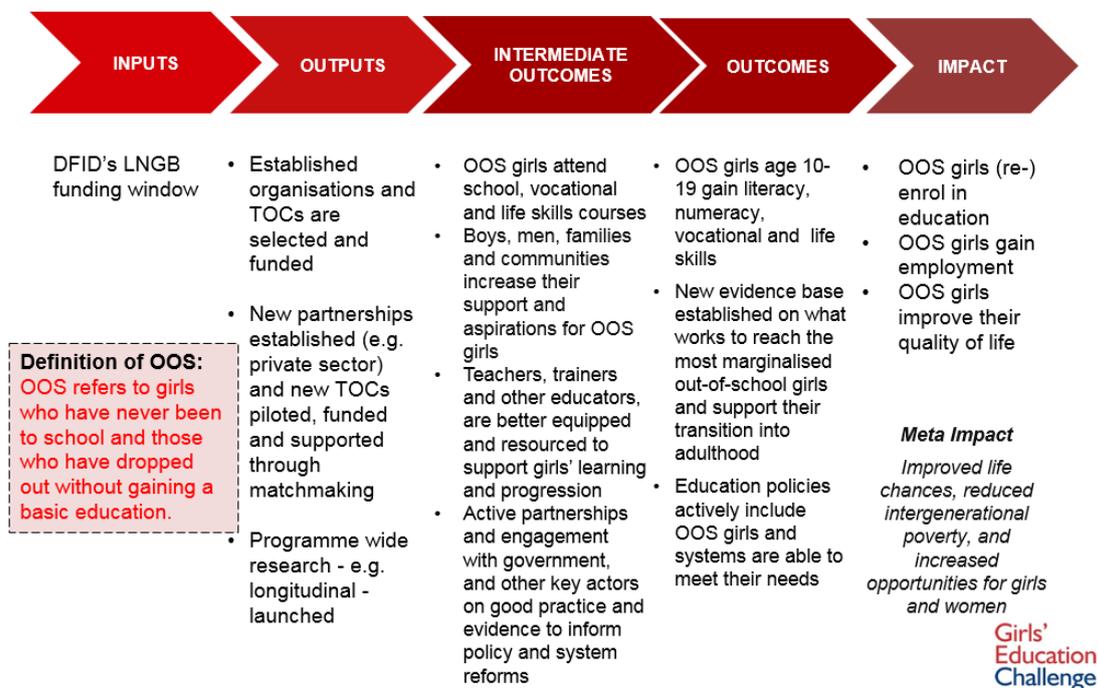
LNGB projects will also contribute to intermediate outcomes, including:

- OOS girls attend school, vocational training and/or life skills courses and/or enter work;
- Boys, men, families and communities increase their support and aspirations for OOS girls;
- Teachers, trainers and other educators, are better equipped and resourced to support girls' learning and progression;
- Active partnerships and engagement with government, and other key actors on good practice and evidence to inform policy and system reforms.

² Literacy and numeracy skills will be measured across all projects and are expected to feature in each Concept Note.

Results chain for the Leave No Girl Behind Window is outlined below

GEC LNGB Programme: Results Chain



5.3 Guidance on literacy and numeracy

The LNGB window will focus on literacy and numeracy as key indicative measures of learning. Each project should put forward its own understanding of the skills and knowledge girls need to function well in their particular situation and in order to access further opportunities as they progress through education or training and should clearly set out strategies which will increase girls' capacity to achieve these within the project timeframe. You may find it useful to refer to some of the terms set out in a recent DFID funded literature review (see Box 1).

Box 1: Literacy and Numeracy key terms

Foundation skills: the prerequisites for learning that children bring to school and that schooling builds on e.g. concepts of print, letter knowledge, vocabulary and oral language; number sense, awareness about quantities, the relations between quantities, and concepts of numbers as one way to represent quantities and their relations.

Basic skills: those skills that enable a person to read simple texts (e.g. decode print and understand) or to perform simple mathematical reasoning and arithmetic (e.g. knowing counting routines, additive reasoning (+, -)).

Fluency: the development of automaticity such that basic reading/mathematical reasoning can be completed without conscious effort and in a timely manner. For example, reading for understanding without attention to decoding.

Inferential understanding: the ability to go beyond the literal; this is critical in reading for meaning and for mathematical reasoning/problem solving.

From a DFID Rigorous Literature Review: Literacy, Foundation Learning and Assessment in Developing Countries (2014)

GEC experience to date has shown that the foundational literacy and numeracy skills necessary to build more complex skills are often lacking or weak in out of school adolescent girls, even if they attended school when they were younger.

In preparing the Concept Note, projects are advised to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the proposed project context in terms of current levels of literacy and numeracy of the proposed beneficiaries. This should draw where possible on relevant national/regional data as well as the applicants' own data
- Highlight the main barriers to education and learning, including language related issues
- Set broad and ambitious goals for learning, and set out the approach that will be taken to achieve these
- Identify other cognitive and non-cognitive skills that may be supported by the project

At full proposal design stage, more detail will be requested on the specific strategies and on how change will be measured, and additional guidance will be provided at that stage.

5.3 Vocational training and life skills

Vocational training – often referred to as TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) - can be a key route for out of school and out of work young people to enter the working world. It typically involves the opportunity for people to develop their technical capacity as well as building entrepreneurial and business skills. For highly marginalised adolescent girls who have limited or no access to financial capital it can be the only opportunity they have to gain valuable skills which provide a pathway to (self) employment or to further training leading to a viable livelihood. Inequitable gender norms often mean that girls do not have the same career and vocational opportunities as boys, and this is exacerbated by generally lower learning levels due to a range of factors.

The GEC LNGB window invites proposals which aim to redress the balance and to provide targeted and appropriate opportunities to vocational training which will change the livelihood prospects for highly marginalised girls. We are looking for initiatives which respond to the particular and often diverse needs and experiences of highly marginalised girls.

Note: Whilst the LNGB Window as a whole targets the age group 10-19 years, vocational training proposals should be age-appropriate and should not detract from or replace basic education, particularly for school-age girls.

Applicants are advised to consider the following key elements when designing vocational training interventions:

- market analysis and matching opportunities with market requirements. Proposals should be based on current information which indicates a clear link between the training being provided and the potential use of the new skills in the local context. It is important that this analysis considers gender dynamics in local economies.
- involvement of potential employers in the project design and implementation, as appropriate. Where possible, this might also include a commitment to provide work placements or employment opportunities after training.
- the range and combination of technical and soft skills which are relevant for the target group.
- the incorporation of literacy and numeracy skills into the intervention
- health and safety aspects, including child protection and protection against sexual exploitation for older girls
- ensuring a gender-friendly and supportive training and working environment
- community-based support for the new vocational pathways being created and for older girls' entry into the workplace.

Life Skills

Life skills – skills necessary or desirable for full participation in everyday life - are often grouped and categorised as:

- cognitive skills for analysing and using information
- personal skills for developing personal agency and managing oneself
- inter-personal skills for communicating and interacting effectively with others.

Within the GEC, the promotion and acquisition of life skills are understood to be a key element of equipping and preparing adolescent girls for adulthood, and can play a vital role in repairing damage that girls have suffered as a result of their marginalisation. As well as having intrinsic practical value, life skills are linked to psychosocial wellbeing and mental health; in post-conflict contexts, they are often promoted as an integral part of the response to post-traumatic stress.

For the LNGB Window, we welcome Concept Note proposals which show how girls aged 10-19 will acquire and use life skills alongside education or training which also equips them with levels of literacy and numeracy which are relevant and meaningful for their particular situation.

5.4 Understanding gender and marginalisation in the GEC

Applicants for LNGB funding will be expected to demonstrate how they will target and respond to the needs of girls who are educationally marginalised, face multiple layers of marginalisation and have not yet benefited from GEC interventions.

Educational marginalisation can be understood as a process by which certain individuals and groups are systematically disadvantaged from accessing education and learning, as a result of contextual, economic and social factors combined with the factors related to an individual's experience of education (how often and at what age they access it, infrastructure, quality and type).

Marginalisation Factors

- **Contextual factors:** where an individual lives and the physical environment and infrastructure that might determine their physical access to school and learning e.g. living in a slum or conflict-affected area.
- **Economic factors:** an individual's access to economic and material resources and livelihoods that enable them to pay for and make time for school and learning e.g. parental unemployment.
- **Social factors:** how society perceives and responds to an individual's socioeconomic status, e.g. negative attitudes towards girls' education and practices such as early marriage.
- **Life-cycle and intergenerational factors:** the life stage or length of time an individual experiences the above factors e.g. adolescents face a unique set of barriers related to reproductive health and social norms around early and forced marriage.

Learning from GEC1: Factors influencing educational marginalisation

Harder to reach: because of intersecting economic, time and social factors combined with difficult-to-address contextual factors (e.g. conflict, remote area, ethnic group) The focus for projects working at this level will be on preventing and addressing dropout, improving attendance and promoting transition of girls. Key barriers for girls in this group might include conservative gender norms that encourage girls to dropout after primary to marry, not having access to a secondary school nearby, high rates of poverty that force girls to work.

Hardest to reach: because of a complex combination of contextual, social and economic factors and may require bespoke, tailored interventions. The focus for projects will be on re-engaging girls who have dropped out or who have never been to school, improving attendance and promoting transition of girls. Key barriers for girls in this group might include conservative gender norms that encourage girls to dropout after primary to marry, not having access to a secondary school nearby, high rates of poverty that force girls to work, not having teachers or facilities that address special needs (disability, being a young mother in need of childcare etc).

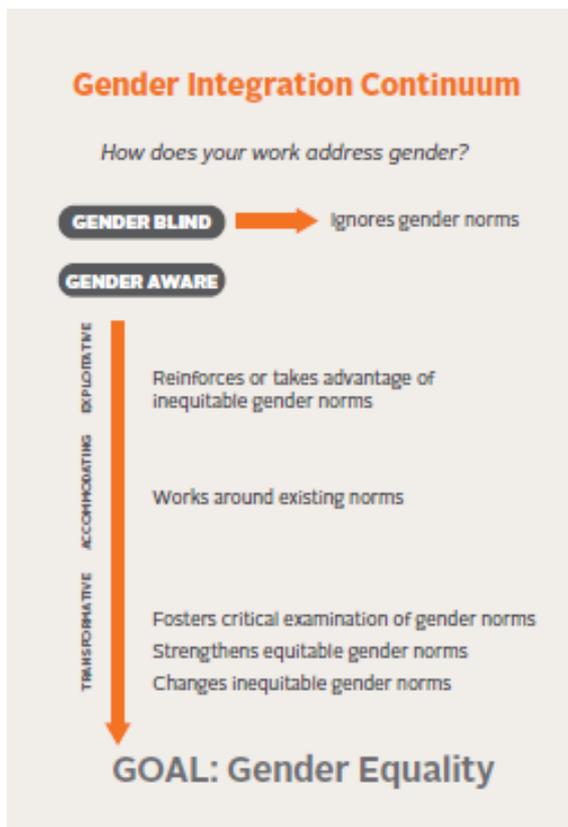
The focus on reaching girls through GEC projects is based on the need to overcome the widespread marginalisation, discrimination and inequality which is experienced by girls. This impacts on girls' enjoyment of their rights, their wellbeing and their life chances. The goal of broader, transformative change has always been and continues to be part of the GEC. However, the contribution of education projects to improving the lives of girls is limited when working with girls in isolation. Simply including or focusing on girls in project interventions does not mean gender inequality is automatically addressed. Girls are firmly located within a social context and are part of peer groups, families and communities. Therefore, projects should reflect a gendered approach in their project design, articulating this approach clearly through their Theory of Change. A gender analysis should therefore inform the design of GEC-funded projects and the theories of change which underpin them.

Social Inclusion

The GEC LNGB window is committed to ensuring highly marginalised girls are targeted and that projects carefully consider the design of their activities to ensure their inclusion in education. As well as the gendered factors that lead to educational marginalisation, projects should consider and address other social and economic factors which contribute to different groups being excluded from accessing learning opportunities. For highly marginalized girls, their educational marginalisation is often rooted in multiple forms of exclusion which require a more holistic response. For example:

- A high number of girls in North West Nigeria are married before age 15 and have never been to school, largely due to gender norms and a lack of schools.
- School policies and social stigma may prevent pregnant girls from going to school, and finding childcare once they have given birth may be difficult.
- Girls with disabilities have high domestic chore burdens and face social stigma in accessing school.

The Fund Manager expects LNGB projects to be able to demonstrate that they have undertaken a contextual analysis and designed a response designed to be inclusive.



Gender Analysis

In designing and implementing LNGB projects, the Fund Manager also expects projects to demonstrate a good understanding of gender equality.

There will be a clear expectation that GEC projects will have conducted a gender analysis of the context in which they operate - and the beneficiaries they are targeting - and will have explicitly used this analysis to inform the project's design and Theory of Change. This analysis should highlight the reasons why target beneficiaries are educationally marginalized, the nature of the barriers they face and should clearly inform the design of interventions to address them.

This analysis is not required at the Concept Note stage, and will only be required after a Full Proposal has been accepted for funding. However, Full Proposals will be expected to consider the following in relation to the specific project context and target beneficiary groups:

- Role of gender norms in shaping girls' and boys' lives
- Value of engaging with men and boys to promote positive change
- Presence of local women's and minority rights organisations
- Impact of violence and harassment, including on girls' learning experiences

- Importance of meeting adolescent girls' basic needs
- Creating a gender equitable environment for learning

Grantees will be required to consider ways in which project activities may unintentionally reinforce inequality and the ways this can be addressed. You will also be encouraged to consider ways in which your projects could add value by strengthening girls' and women's status in communities through project activities.

The inclusion of boys

While the primary focus on girls' education in GEC projects must be clear, that does not mean that girls should be targeted in a vacuum. Education also provides an important opportunity to engage boys within learning environments to challenge gender inequality and encourage them to view girls as equal partners in education and in life. Where a robust gender analysis points towards significant marginalisation among boys, or where knowledge of the local context shows that gender inequalities could increase and tensions could build if boys are not included in projects, then this should be considered. Where a compelling case is made for the inclusion of boys in learning environments, this forms a valid aspect of GEC projects and one that fits with the ultimate goal of seeking to improve the life chances of girls.

5.6 Child Protection and Do No Harm in the LNGB Window

Do No Harm

Based on learning from GEC 1 regarding the potential for projects to inadvertently or otherwise do harm to girls or their communities through project design or operational approaches, the Fund Manager has developed a new Do No Harm (DNH) policy (see Annex). The policy aims to help GEC recipients think about harm in their contexts and provides examples and learning from GEC 1, as well as well-recognised tools and best practice examples of implementing DNH approaches.

As part of the Full Proposal submission (for successful Concept Note applicants) projects will need to demonstrate that they have understood both the context in which they operate, including drivers of conflict where relevant, political dynamics, social norms adhered to by communities and the services available there, and the interaction between their interventions and the context. Projects should demonstrate efforts to adhere to international best practice (DFID, OECD guidance) on effective and ethical development practice, including consultation with and respectful conduct towards communities and appropriate local authorities, local ownership, being politically-smart and sustainable as far as possible. Projects should be able to show that they used this understanding to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts of their interventions. These are some steps towards integrating Do No Harm principles into projects' design and implementation.

Child Protection programming and capacity

By placing child protection at their core, education projects are able to both fulfil children's rights to be free from violence and ensure that students have a positive experience of school and education. Safe learning environments, free from violence, are known to support students' progression and their learning outcomes. The LNGB Window therefore expects that projects will be able to demonstrate that they have strong child protection awareness and capacity in place in order to ensure the projects' initial designs respond to the needs of children and shows commitment to DNH principles and compliance with the GEC DNH policy.

While projects do not necessarily need to include explicit violence prevention and response interventions, all projects must have adequate child protection capacity in place from the

outset. This includes the capacity to conduct child protection and do no harm assessments in order to ensure the safety of children in project activities and to mitigate any potential emerging child protection issues. Experience from GEC 1 showed that many projects ended up working with children who had experienced violence through interventions such as awareness raising around child rights, sexual and reproductive health and girls' clubs interventions. Projects should therefore think carefully about how child protection might feature in the logic chain to support girls' education.

Organisational child safeguarding policy

All projects will need to comply with the GEC standards related to organisational child safeguarding. An organisational child safeguarding policy is where organisations show a commitment to prevent children from violence and exploitation perpetrated by staff and (sub)contractors within an organisation, by putting in place policies and procedures to minimise these risks. The GEC has developed 12 minimum standards outlined below that all lead and implementing partners will need to adhere to.

In anticipation of Full Proposal development, projects should note that the Minimum Standards and consider how they can best demonstrate fulfilment of these standards. If successful at the full proposal stage, all grantees will need to complete a self-audit to show adherence to these standards and submit to the Fund Manager for consideration during the inception phase before projects can commence implementation.

The 12 guidelines on child safeguarding within recipient organisations (mandatory for all grantees)

Area of safeguarding	Minimum standards for GEC recipients
Policies and procedures to keep children safe	1. All organisations (lead, implementing or other partners or contractors) must have a written, comprehensive Child Protection Policy that includes a Code of Conduct that all staff must review, sign and adhere to. Each organisation will need to be able to show that they have their own policy in place and that this is being implemented. 2. The consequences of staff breaching the Policy are clear and linked to organisational disciplinary procedures. 3. There are clear, well-publicised reporting procedures in place that allow staff, children and families to raise concerns confidentially about poor practice, unacceptable behaviour or actual/potential abuse by staff or contractors and that provide step-by-step guidance on what action to take.
Preventing harm to children	4. There are policies and procedures or agreed ways of recruiting staff and partners that include assessing their suitability to work with children such as reference checks, and that where possible, police checks are undertaken.
Implementation and training	5. All members of staff, including volunteers, will have training on child protection when they begin work on the project, which includes an introduction and agreement to adhere to the organisation's Child Protection Policy and Procedures
Information and	6. Children and families are made aware of their right to be safe from exploitation and abuse at the hands of staff and associates and how to

communication	<p>make complaints, including via a child-friendly mechanism, should any issues or incidents arise.</p> <p>7. Everyone in the organisation is informed of which named staff member/s have specific child protection responsibilities under the Policy and how to contact them.</p>
Monitoring and review	<p>8. The implementation of organisational protection measures is subject to regular (every two years) monitoring and review using the Child Protection Self-Audit Tool as provided in the recipient self-audit to check that adequate steps have been taken and to assess the effectiveness of these measures. The audit will need to be submitted to the Fund Manager for consideration.</p> <p>9. All concerns, incidents or allegations of abuse and complaints are taken seriously, responded to appropriately, recorded, followed up and monitored.</p>
Partnership responsibilities	<p>10. Contractors/Consultants working with children must meet the above standards and make sure that their sub-contractors working with children also have in place measures that mean they are in compliance with the standards.</p> <p>11. There are clear lines of accountability within consortia, with the lead partner being responsible for ensuring adherence to the GEC minimum standards.</p>
Reporting to FM	<p>12. Any breaches of these minimum standards need to be reported to the Fund Manager immediately by the lead partner.</p>

Protection of young women (18+ years)

The Fund Manager recognises that in some instances GEC grantees may work with girls who are older than 17 and would therefore be classed as young women rather than children and not covered by either international or national child rights legislation. However, these young women face many similar challenges to adolescent girls, including being vulnerable to different forms of gender based violence (GBV), including but not limited to sexual abuse, intimate partner violence, transactional sex, forced marriage and others. In these circumstances projects are expected to be aware of risks that these young women may face and ensure their interventions do not put them at undue risk and that identified risks are mitigated to the extent possible.

5.7 Sustainability in GEC

For the GEC, sustainability means that beneficiary girls and others continue to enjoy the benefits of interventions, to the end of a cycle of education or training and as they transition beyond this. It also means that families, communities, and schools are able to continue providing this kind of support to new generations of girls and boys to enter and progress through school, gaining a good quality education. The sustainability of outcomes is key, both through sustained interventions and associated changes in behaviour.

What strategies and approaches can projects adopt?

Sustainability will derive from a number of possible strategies and approaches. There is no standard GEC approach to this, but in broad terms strategies are expected to focus on one or more of the following levels:

1. **Government/national education systems:** influencing government policy, policy implementation, and education systems (e.g. teacher development, school governance, assessment, inclusion), as well as commitments to finance particular interventions, to ensure girls' needs are better met within national and local plans;
2. **Schools and local systems:** strengthening capacity to implement policy, systems and interventions which address the barriers faced by girls and enable girls to attend regularly and learn, changing attitudes and behaviour of school stakeholders (especially teachers and head teachers) and local officials, and capacity to raise resources locally;
3. **Community and family:** changing attitudes and behaviour in the community and family to ensure sustained support for girls over time, including helping families to increase their income and use this to support their daughters to go to school;
4. **Other actors:** projects can also target private sector actors, donor agencies and others, to raise funds and coordinate and align interventions/approaches in ways that optimise opportunities for sustained support and change. At the core of all strategies is the ability to show evidence of what works, and use it to make a clear case for sustaining an intervention or approach. Projects may also have a role to build capacity, and potentially influence the incentives/will of key actors to sustain interventions in the future, beyond the point where project staff and resources are available. In this respect, a number of GEC1 projects have from the start worked closely with local officials and stakeholders, and where possible facilitated voluntary inputs (of time and other resources) from the community, or built in other incentives.

Ensuring sustainability of outcomes and interventions is complex, and project strategies need to be realistic, focus on what can be achieved in the short term, while building in ambition for longer term, systemic change. Government departments may need time to see the benefits of an intervention, and especially to put in place financial and human resources and capacity. Communities and families also need time to adjust attitudes and behaviour, and need to continue to see real returns, whether it be from provision of voluntary time/support, or engagement in income generating activity. It is also important to be realistic about situations which will require continued external funding and other technical support for years to come, and how that might be achieved.

Some key questions to consider in this include:

- What kind of change is expected to be sustained and is there already evidence to show this is worth sustaining?
- Which key stakeholders will the project work with to secure this sustainability, and how will their capacity and will for sustained change been strengthened?
- What kind of engagement will be needed with government, communities, and other actors (donors/private sector)?
- In broad terms, what resources (human/financial) would be needed over the medium to longer term?

We recognise that strategies for sustainability may be different for private sector applicants, who may consider the generation of income and revenue streams as supporting a plan for financial sustainability (either of the initiative as a whole, or of specific components). We welcome the articulation of innovative models of sustainability as part of applicants' Concept Note applications.

5.7 Monitoring and Evaluation Principles

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is a very important component of the GEC. In particular, evaluation requirements may be **more rigorous** than applicants have experienced on other funds.

At the Concept Note stage, applicants are not expected to provide a detailed M&E plan. However, please note that the following guidance applies to the LNGB window and will be expected to be addressed from the Full Proposal stage onwards.

Projects need to have a clear and transparent approach to **counting the beneficiaries** of their programme – specifically for those girls expected to have improved impacts in terms of employment, (re-) enrolment or improving quality of their family lives, as well as outcomes including learning over the life of the project. In addition, a solid approach to how these girls will be tracked and monitored throughout the life of the project is a requirement.

In addition to ongoing monitoring of outputs, projects will be expected to evaluate their outputs and outcomes in a more rigorous manner at defined points in time throughout the project. The number of evaluation points will depend on the length of the project – with **baseline** and **endline** evaluations being a minimum requirement.

As a principle, all evaluations are expected to make use of an **experimental** or **quasi-experimental** evaluation approach – i.e. making use of well-matched treatment and control groups. This is required in order to establish a relevant counterfactual in order to evaluate the ‘additional’ impact of the project over-and-above what otherwise might happen. Projects using highly rigorous approaches such as well-designed randomised control trials (RCTs) with a specific focus on improving evidence on what works for improving employment, (re-) enrolment or improving quality of their family lives, will be viewed favourably at application stage.

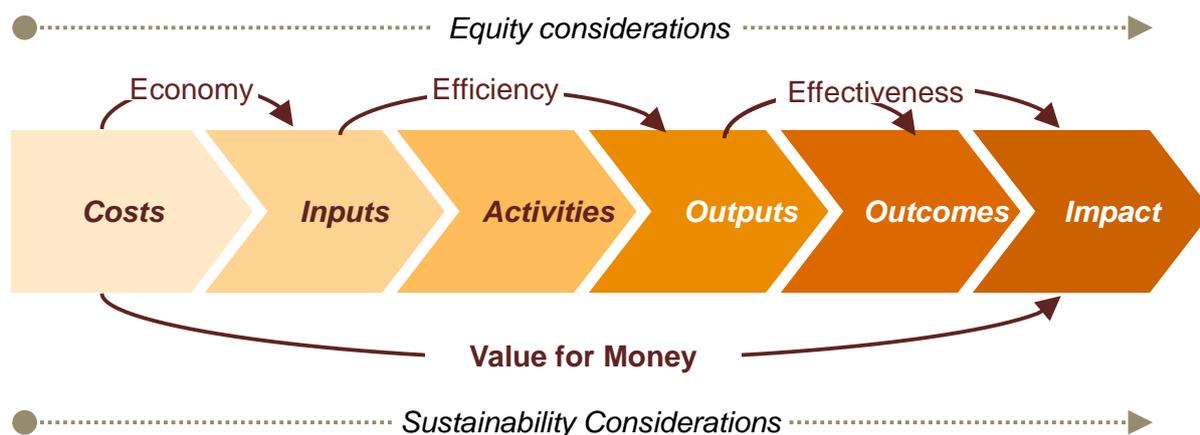
The evaluation is expected to be **longitudinal** in nature – that is a representative sample/cohort of beneficiary girls need to be identified at baseline and then these same girls **followed-up** at subsequent evaluation points. As such, a robust approach to re-contacting beneficiaries and dealing with possible attrition needs to be proposed.

Learning tests and **household surveys** will be a requirement for both treatment and control groups at all evaluation points. In addition, projects will need to employ a range of **qualitative evaluation techniques** to understand ‘why’ certain changes are occurring or not occurring. This will supplement the quantitative data from learning tests and household surveys.

Demonstrating strong evaluation skills is extremely important. All projects will be expected to identify and appoint an **external evaluation firm** with the capacity and capability to undertake an evaluation to the required level of rigour. In addition, we expect that projects will have **sufficient in-house capability** to manage and oversee such an evaluation, and to demonstrate how this role will be fulfilled.

5.8 GEC and value for money (VfM)

VfM within the GEC follows a model spanning from costs at one end of the spectrum to impact at the other, as shown in the following diagram. VfM is considered across the areas of **Economy**, **Efficiency**, and **Effectiveness**, which each covering different aspects of the VfM framework. This is all underpinned by considerations of **Equity** and **Sustainability**.



Very important to note is that while costs and inputs factor into this model, VfM is not about pure cost minimisation or over-simplified measures such as 'cost per girl'. Such a narrow approach would not align with the Smart Rules. Rather, it focuses on broader assessments of cost-effectiveness in order to support the **best feasible interventions**. The VfM framework is intrinsically linked to our logical framework (logframe) – the GEC's primary management tool that tracks outputs, outcomes and impacts.

The GEC was specifically designed to target the most marginalised girls – including girls with disabilities and girls in fragile and conflict-affected states. In such cases, VfM decisions are made to fund such interventions as we place intrinsic value on the **equity** considerations – in particular the severe inequities being tackled by such projects.

VfM = The best feasible intervention

Economy: Assessing the acquisition and usage of financial, human or material resources. VfM is typically assessed in terms of the unit costs of inputs involved (e.g personnel costs, procurement costs, travel costs, and other costs), benchmarking, appropriateness to context, quality of the inputs procured, and the complementarity of the inputs (considering what already exists).

Efficiency: Assessing the conversion of inputs to outputs. VfM is assessed on the quality of outputs that are generated by the activities undertaken by both the projects and the FM, and in particular for the FM the processes put into place to help facilitate this.

Effectiveness: Assessing the ability of projects to achieve their intended outcomes and subsequent impacts over the longer term. It focusses on results and achievement of observable, verifiable indicators.

Overall VfM assessment needs to weight economy, efficiency and effectiveness considerations against the aims and objectives of the portfolio and the overall fund – not just simply looking at economy as is often done. The model also places specific weight on **equity and sustainability** considerations as central to decision- making, and in weighting efficiency, economy and effectiveness.

6. Enquiries

For further information, please use the query function in the online Application Form in the first instance. If this does not work, please email girlseducationchallenge@uk.pwc.com, with 'LNGB – Concept Note general query' in the subject line.

7. Useful References & Documents

We recommend that you refer to the DFID Policy Paper *Leaving no one behind: Our promise* (Nov 2015), which contains useful guidance on marginalisation and inclusion:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/leaving-no-one-behind-our-promise/leaving-no-one-behind-our-promise>

In addition, GEC VfM documentation and GEC thematic discussion papers on the following topics are attached on the front page of the application form.

GEC thematic discussion papers:

- Understanding and addressing educational marginalisation;
- Economic interventions and school outcomes;
- Community-based awareness, attitudes and behaviour;
- Self-esteem and learning;
- Preventing and responding to violence against children;
- Teaching and learning;
- Education technology in GEC; and
- School governance and provision.

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