

Terms of Reference (ToRs) for
Hiring of Third-Party Verification Agent (TPVA) for DLI/DLR Verification under
Actions to Strengthen Performance for Inclusive and Responsive Education (ASPIRE)

A. Background

The Actions to Strengthen Performance for Inclusive and Responsive Education (ASPIRE) program is implemented by the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MoFEPT) in close coordination with provincial departments of education, funded by the World Bank. Its objective is to support the Government to: (1) respond to school disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic; (2) recover access and improve education quality; and (3) enhance sector resilience through better coordination, with a focus on disadvantaged areas and vulnerable populations. The Project has twelve disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs) each of which have annual targets over the five-year Project period (July 2020 to June 2025). Program design is based on the premise that responding to COVID-19 and getting children safely back to school in the short-term, while at the same time including distance learning opportunities, will mitigate the impact of external shocks on the education system and student outcomes. Program activities and actions are centered on implementing safety protocols, including WASH; communication campaigns; supporting teachers, students and parents; as well as supporting the curation, editing, and broadcasting of pedagogical content via TV, radio, and on-line which will positively disrupt the system for out-of-school children in the medium-term.

The results-based financing instrument (US\$200 million) will disburse resources conditional on satisfactory achievement of a series of disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs) as defined in the verification protocols. Each DLI reflects intermediate outcomes, outputs, or institutional changes that are critical to achievement of the Program development objective. These were selected and weighted based on their technical relevance, strategic focus on sector enhancement as defined by the Government Program, and relevance to the COVID-19 pandemic response priorities. The Program has a total of 12 DLIs that will help achieve Program objectives. DLIs were selected based on their transformational effect and ability to push progress towards Program goals.

DLIs are the overall Program indicators that need to be achieved and they are measured by Disbursement Linked Results (DLRs). Each DLR has a specified verification protocol agreed upon during preparation and appraisal (see next section). Verification is typically handled by Government independent entities, usually in charge of conducting audits, or by private firms contracted by the Government. These Terms of Reference refer to hiring of a consultant as an “independent verification agency” (IVA) who will conduct third party validation (TPV) of the Program’s DLRs for Year 1.

B. Independent Verification Consultancy - Third Party Validation

The Consultant will be tasked with conducting Third-Party Validation (TPV) of the Program's disbursement linked results (DLRs), specifically, DLRs 1, 3, 5 and 6. Results reviewed and documentation prepared by the Consultant will be sent to the Bank by MoFEPT, indicating achievement and verification of relevant DLRs.

Role with MoFEPT and coordination with units

The Consultant will be commissioned by the MoFEPT and selected based on meeting qualification requirements detailed in the following section. The primary role of the Consultant under the scope of the Project is to verify the documentary evidence/ data furnished by MoFEPT as a proof of achievement of DLRs 1, 3, 5 and 6. The Consultant will be responsible for verifying the information furnished by the MoFEPT through a desk-based review before the same is submitted to the World Bank for release of funds tagged with the related DLR. It may be noted that some of the DLIs are scalable, i.e., MoFEPT can claim disbursement from the World Bank on partial achievement of DLR targets.

The Consultant will coordinate with the following Federal- and provincial-level units for the verification of indicated DLRs:

- **DLR 1 and 3:** *MoFEPT International Coordination Unit, MoFEPT Project Coordination Unit (PCU), Technical Steering Committee through PCU*
- **DLR 5 and 6:** *MoFEPT International Coordination Unit, MoFEPT Project Coordination Unit (PCU) and National Commission for Human Development (NCHD).*

C. Scope of Consultancy

- Familiarize themselves with the overall design of ASPIRE, particularly the DLIs and DLRs and their verification protocols, detailed in Section-IV below;
- Review inputs gathered by the Ministry's M&E consultant/consultancy;
- Undertake a desk review of the evidence provided by program districts on achievement of given target for a DLR and verify that it is in accordance with the respective verification protocol;
- As part of the desk review, hold discussions with relevant technical teams of MoFEPT and, if required, seek additional information to ensure the completeness of evidence
- Guide MoFEPT in case the evidence is not complete, or is not on appropriate format, to facilitate its early completion
- Prepare a report verifying the completeness of the evidence
- Perform any other tasks necessary to achieve the objective of the assignment

D. Qualifications Required

- Master's degree in project management / economics / statistics / business / public administration / public policy, or the social sciences. Exceptional candidates with other degrees will also be considered.
- A minimum of five (5) years of experience providing technical and management support for M&E activities and research studies, preferably for development sector projects.
- Demonstrated experience in developing sample frameworks, data collection methodologies, data collection instruments, data collection plans and schedules, and data analysis and tabulation plans.
- Experience with data analysis (quantitative and qualitative) from primary and secondary sources.
- Ability to lead, manage and facilitate purposeful meetings with client, short-term consultants, and subcontractors.

E. Deliverables

- i. Summary of Desk reviews for each DLR achievement, along with evidence of information compiled and presented including data sources as indicated in the verification protocols of PAD.
- ii. A Verification report on completeness of evidence for each DLR.

F. Proposed Timeline

The period for verification of DLRs 1, 3, 5 and 6 starts from 20th November, 2021 and the assignment will continue till December, 31st 2021.

G. Payment

The Consultant will be paid on the delivery of verification reports for each of the DLR 1,3,5 and 6 over the period of assignment.

H. DISBURSEMENT LINKED RESULTS TO BE EXAMINED BY THE CONSULTANT

DLR 1. Adoption of National School Health and Safety Protocols (USD \$10,000)

Description of DLR: The National School Health and Safety Protocols is a document satisfactory to the Bank that will contain guidelines for protecting and maintaining teacher and student mental and physical health, as well as safety protocols for operating and maintaining a safe school for students and staff, and practices to prevent the contagion of COVID-19 and other transmissible diseases. To achieve this DLR, the government will adopt these protocols.

Verification tasks: For independent verification of this DLR, the Consultant will

- Review document approved by the Inter-Provincial Education Minister's Conference (IPEMC) and/or MoFEPT through PCU
- Review official government announcement (memo or other) of adoption of Protocols
- Review and gather evidence of public announcement and approval

Data Source: Final documents gathered by Ministry's M&E Consultancy, minutes of IPEMC, Ministerial decision or other equivalent document

DLR 3. Approval of revised National Education Response and Resilience plan by IPEMC (USD \$10,000)

Description of DLR: The National Education Response and Resilience Plan is a document produced and made public by the MoFEPT to serve as an education response framework for the COVID-19 and any other future emergencies including environmental or climate change related emergencies (e.g. cyclones, floods, etc.). Revision and approval mean that the document, using the May 2020 draft of the Plan or a similar one, is revised, updated, and agreed with all provinces.

Verification tasks: For independent verification of this DLR, the Consultant will

- Review minutes of the IPEMC's technical discussions
- Review any document capturing content and/or conclusions of stakeholder consultations held to revise the plan, including: minutes, notes or reports made, technical discussion held by TSC
- Review evidence regarding approval of the plan, which includes official notifications.

Data Source: Minutes of IPEMC, documents gathered and compiled by Ministry's M&E Consultancy.

DLR 5. Up to 50,000 students receive distance learning kits (USD \$10,000)

Description of DLR: Learning kits include any learning or pedagogical material that aims at helping students engage with distance learning content or that supports home-based work to develop cognitive, motor, or socio-emotional skills. At a minimum the kit should include material for at least language and math sufficient to cover a full year of content through distance learning. Students must not have received a learning kit, with similar content, that was financed by the World Bank in order to be counted towards DLR achievement.

Verification tasks: For independent verification of this DLR, the Consultant will

- Review district records for school supplies against shipment records. The review should verify that at minimum the kit includes material for at least language and math, sufficient to cover a full year of content through distance learning.
- Verify through review of ongoing provincial projects that students must not have received a learning kit, with similar content, that was financed by the World Bank in order to be counted towards DLR achievement.
- Review existing phone survey results of students in distribution areas to confirm delivery of learning kits

Data Source: MoFEPT report, shipment records, phone survey results, other documents gathered and compiled by Ministry's M&E Consultancy.

DLR 6. At least 20,000 public schools receive cleaning kits (USD \$10,000)

Description of DLR: Cleaning kits include products (e.g. sanitizers, soap, masks, and/or cleaning products) that help combat the spread of viruses and infectious diseases in schools and any other environmental and health related hazards. This DLR will be implemented by Provincial Education Departments.

Verification tasks: For independent verification of this DLR, the Consultant will

- Review district records for school supplies against shipment records. School supplies should include products recommended for disinfection by national or international health authorities to combat COVID-19. At minimum, the kit should: (i) disinfectant, (ii) cleaning mops or similar, buckets or similar, and (iii) soap.
- Verify that Schools must not have received a cleaning kit, with similar content, that was financed by another World Bank project in order to be counted towards DLR achievement.

Data Source: MoFEPT report, report from the Departments of School Education, phone survey results and other documents gathered and compiled by Ministry's M&E Consultancy.

I. Selection Process:

The Consultant will be selected under Public Procurement Rules, 2004 (Revised 2020).

