

ToRs for Independent Verification Agency for
Actions to Strengthen Performance for Inclusive and Responsive Education
(ASPIRE) Program

Program Background and Objectives:

Actions to Strengthen Performance for Inclusive and Responsive Education (ASPIRE) is a five-year (2020-2025) Program that links disbursement of World Bank funds against the delivery of defined results¹ referred to as disbursement-linked results (DLRs). The performance of the Program is measured against 26 indicators that are part of the results framework out of which 12 are linked to disbursements². ASPIRE is a US\$200 million loan taken by the Federal Government that is distributed as grants to the provinces for the implementation of eligible activities in specified lagging districts. ASPIRE's short- and long-term interventions are designed to accelerate recovery of a better education system while promoting equity through establishment of a new system of incentives for provinces to invest in the most disadvantaged geographical areas and encourage uptake of alternate modes of education service delivery.

The Program's objectives include:

- Respond to school disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic
- Recover access and improve education quality
- Enhance sector resilience through better coordination, with a focus on disadvantaged areas and vulnerable populations.

The scope of the Program consists of three results areas:

Results Area 1: Response, Recovery, Resilience: Enhanced and targeted COVID-19 education response with a focus on:

- a. Enhancement of distance education content
- b. Number of students receiving learning materials in lagging districts
- c. Expanding connectivity for education in at least lagging districts
- d. Health and Safety protocol awareness in education
- e. Improvement of hygiene in public schools
- f. Number of children, teachers, and parents reached with sensitization campaigns for education and mental health wellbeing
- g. Number of girls enrolled in multimodal Programs in lagging districts

¹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/what-we-do/products-and-services/financing-instruments>

² Results Framework provided in Annex 1

Result Area 2: Improved opportunities for learning for Out of School children (OOSC) and at-risk students, with focus on:

- a. Number of classrooms built and rehabilitated in lagging districts
- b. Improved WASH facilities in schools attended by girls
- c. Pilot on OOSC enrolled in elementary-level distance education programs with a pathway to certification
- d. Implementation of teacher training programs on distance learning, accelerated programs and formative assessment
- e. Implementation of distance teacher coaching program with a focus on lagging districts
- f. Number of students benefiting from new accelerated learning programs in lagging districts
- g. Take-up, impact, and process assessments of distance education and communication campaign for adaptive implementation
- h. Number of children reached with back-to-school sensitization and behavioral nudges, focusing on girls and marginalized groups
- i. Number of received teaching materials including scripted lessons, and teachers guides with a focus on lagging districts

Results Area 3: Stronger federal-provincial coordination and management with a focus on:

- a. Approval and availability of funds for the grant mechanism under National Equitable Education Program (NEEP)
- b. Allocation of grant funding from provinces to lagging areas/districts
- c. Improvement of the collection of education data, analysis, and transparency
- d. National and international assessment
- e. Knowledge sharing events and capacity building, series on what works in education

As mentioned above, the Program has 12 disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs), each with annual targets over the five-year implementation period (July 2020 to June 2025), including 20 DLRs³ to which payments are tied. For the World Bank to disburse against achieved DLRs, the verification of targets by an independent verification agency (IVA).

The Program is managed by the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training's (MoFEPT) Project Coordination Unit (PCU) that oversees coordination, implementation, monitoring and financial management of the Program. The Program is in its third year of implementation and four DLRs have been achieved and verified to date.

³ Definitions of DLIs/DLRs provided in [Appendix-C](#)

Objectives of Assignment:

MoFEPT requires the services of a firm to: (a) verify the achievement of DLRs for Years 2-5 on an annual basis in accordance with their verification protocols outlined in the [Program Appraisal Document \(PAD\)](#)⁴, Project Agreement, and Project Operational Manual (POM) to ascertain compliance, (b) collect data against Program Development Objective Indicators (PDO) 1 and 2 targets⁵, also outlined in the PAD.

The verification will be based on the specific parameters defined under the verification protocols in PAD and POM to ascertain compliance. The achievement of selected DLI targets will be verified and recommended to MoFEPT by the IVA before the funds can be disbursed. This consultancy shall require close interaction with the PCU, MoFEPT, provincial education departments, and the World Bank.

Scope of Consultancy:

The primary task of this exercise will be to carry out transparent and impartial verification of DLIs under the three results areas of the project. The scope and extent of the contract are to verify and validate the completion and achievement of eight (8) remaining DLIs and their fifteen (15) associated DLRs, collect data against PDO 1 and 2, and submit annual reports in July of each year and one final report at project closing. The IVA is expected to carry out the assignment directly and independently.

Description of tasks:

The IVA will provide the following services:

a) **Verification and validation of achievement of DLIs and associated DLRs for Years 2-5**

Design evaluation methodology for verification of the progress made on DLIs and associated DLRs in line with the verification protocols described in the PAD⁶, Project Agreement, and POM to ascertain compliance. The methodology must be agreed with the PCU-MoFEPT and the World Bank. *(Table. 3 and Annex-1⁷ of the PAD indicating DLI Verification Protocol Table is the guiding document for any ambiguity, interpretation, correction, or conflict with these TORs and/or methodology. Interested firms can download the PAD from the World Bank website here:*

⁴ The PAD provisions for each of the PDOs, DLIs and DLRs along with their respective verification protocols are made an integral part of this document as **Appendix-A and placed at Annex 1 and 2**

⁵ Description of PDO 1 and 2 Provided in **Appendix B**

⁶ Placed at **Appendix-A**

⁷ Also placed at **Appendix-A**

<https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/document-detail/PI73399?type=projects>)

- Assess progress against each DLI and validate achievement as envisaged in PAD, Project Agreement and POM to ascertain compliance. Verify that PCU-MoFEPT and provincial education departments properly documented the progress. Submit the verification report to PCU-MoFEPT no later than one month before the end of the fiscal year; *for e.g., May 2023 (for fiscal year ending 30th June 2023)*. The verification report will follow the predetermined template and will include:
 - a) Summary of verification activities undertaken to check the accuracy of data collected against DLIs;
 - b) Summary of DLIs and associated DLRs achievement;
 - c) Summaries of major discrepancies between reported and verified targets along with short explanations for such discrepancies, constructive critical analysis for why achievement against specific targets may be above or below targets;
 - d) Recommendation on whether the DLR has been achieved, partially achieved, or not achieved for each year respectively.

b) Data collection against PDO 1 and 2 targets for Year 2-5

- Design the data collection methodology, including sampling strategy, instruments, analysis, piloted data collection tools with statistical significance for data collection against PDO 1 and 2 targets for year 2-5 which will be vetted by the MoFEPT before implementation in field⁸;
- Collect data on PDO 1 and 2 targets for Years 2-5.
- Submit annual monitoring reports to PCU-MoFEPT outlining the data collection and results. The yearly reports will contain a description of the assignment (e.g., activities developed), the database and/or sampling strategy and tools used to collect data, process of calculation, as well as an analysis of the progress of implementation, and problems found during the assignment.

c) Other general tasks and responsibilities:

- i. Maintain regular communication with the PCU-MoFEPT via meetings, audio-conference, videoconference, and email regarding all aspects of the evaluation procedure, data collection, audit process, reporting framework etc.
- ii. Provide timely feedback on assignments and instructions from the PCU-MoFEPT via letter, phone, or email.

⁸ Baselines for PDO 1 and 2 have been calculated using PSLM and ASER data, therefore, data collection instruments for future targets must be consistent with instruments used to calculate baselines to ensure consistency in the measurement.

- iii. Provide the PCU-MoFEPT with copies of its evaluation procedure workflow and its data collection methodology for review.
- iv. Seek guidance from the PCU-MoFEPT's team before troubleshooting any sensitive/complex problems that arise during the process.
- v. Comply with all general independence, confidentiality, and professional integrity codes. Seek advice from the PCU-MoFEPT when uncertain about requirements and expectations in this regard.

Deliverables

| Deliverable | Timelines | Description |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Inception Report | Within 2 weeks of signing of contract | Inception Report outlining the strategy for measurement and verification of DLIs and associated DLRs, and PDO 1 and 2 targets. |
| 2. Formats for verification report for DLIs and DLRs, and progress reporting on PDO 1 and 2 | Within 4 weeks of signing of contract | Submit the data reporting formats using parameters such as checking, verification, analyzing and verification of the accuracy of data submitted for achievement of project targets. Develop the data collection tools for PDO 1 and 2 targets. |
| 3. 1 st Verification Report | <i>Draft:</i> Within 8 weeks of signing of contract <i>Final:</i> within 10 weeks of signing | Verification report of Year 1 and 2 targets covering DLIs 2, 4, 9, 10, 12. |
| 4. Monitoring report for PDO 1 and 2 targets | Within 12 weeks of signing of contract | Consolidated data monitoring report on status of targets for Year 2 of the project covering PDO 1 and 2. The parameters to be included in report are provided in the section above |
| 5. Reports on the Third, Fourth and Fifth Years of the Program (2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25). | By May of each year (i.e., one month before the end of the fiscal year) | Consolidated Verification Reports for each respective year following the structure presented in the section above |
| 6. Annual data collection report for PDO 1 and 2 targets | Annually | Annual report on data collection for PDO 1 and 2 targets. |

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| 7. Final verification report | Within 4 weeks from end of Program | Consolidated verification report for all the years against all the DLIs, DLRs and PDO 1 and 2. This will help determine any deviation in the results achieved and reported while validating the actual disbursements against the targets. |
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Coordination:

The IVA will report to the National Project Director of the PCU, or any other staff designated by MoFEPT. All submitted reports/work must be approved by the National Project Director or the designated staff.

The PCU will be the principal organization/agency responsible for creating liaison between the firm and other concerned departments/stakeholders.

Selection Process:

The procurement for hiring of firm to undertake independent verification and data collection of ASPIRE targets will be done under the Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) method of Public Procurement Rules Consultancy regulations, 2010.

Under QCBS, detailed evaluation criteria will be defined in the RFP document while shortlisting of EoIs will be done against the following broad parameters:

- Profile of the of the Firm and Status of Registration
- Relevant Assignments Executed by the Firm
- Managerial capacity/Human Resources available with the firm
- Understanding of the Scope of Work, Methodology and Adherence to Timelines for the Assignment

The RFP document with detailed evaluation criteria will be shared with the shortlisted firms.