

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

Supporting an Education Reform Agenda for Improved Teaching, Assessment and Career Pathways (SERATAC)”

Supporting the Review and Revision of Kindergarten Education Resources for Gaza

“Individual Consultant Selection”

I. Introduction

The Ministry of Education & Higher Education (MOEHE) has received a grant from the World Bank to implement the “**Supporting an Education Reform Agenda for Improved Teaching, Assessment and Career Pathways (SERATAC)**” program. The program aims at improving education outcomes of primary and secondary students and increasing student pathways to tertiary education and the labor market.”

The program is the first phase of a multiphase programmatic approach (MPA); and it includes four components as follows:

- **Component 1:** Building strong foundations for learning and wellbeing
- **Component 2:** Harnessing technology to improve STEM learning and better equip students for the labor market
- **Component 3:** Strengthening the student learning assessment system
- **Component 4:** Project management and implementation support

Background

Component 1

Many Palestinian children do not gain basic reading proficiency in their early grades of school. Reading with comprehension is arguably the most important skill a child needs to learn in their early school years. Without basic reading proficiency, children are unable to move on to “read to learn.” Reading is the gateway to further learning, including in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). It is also essential for developing deeper learning skills such as problem solving and critical thinking. The World Bank’s Learning Poverty indicator measures countries’ progress in terms of children having the foundational skill of reading with understanding by the age of 10. There is currently no measure of learning poverty in West Bank and Gaza (WB&G) due to the lack of participation in international assessments of student learning at around that age. However, a 2014 Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) found that over a third (36 percent) of 2nd-graders in West Bank could not answer a single age-appropriate reading comprehension question, and less than half (46 percent) could not read more than 15 correct words per minute, well below the MOEHE’s expectations. Boys’ reading comprehension is particularly low: 43 percent of boys could not answer a single age-appropriate reading comprehension question in grade 2 compared to 29 percent of girls. Over a quarter of boys (27 percent) in the 2014 EGRA could not read a single correct word of an age-appropriate text in a minute compared to 17 percent of girls. Poor reading outcomes are common among Arabic-speaking countries and there is a myriad of contributing factors. A 2021 World Bank report on “Advancing Arabic Teaching and Learning: A Path to Reducing Learning Poverty in MENA” found that some of the key factors influencing poor reading outcomes in the region included (i) the lack of exposure before school to children’s books and to vocabulary, including Modern

Standard Arabic (MSA), through reading to children and word games, for example; (ii) poor awareness of the science of learning to read and how best to teach Arabic language to young native speakers; and (iii) ineffective preparation of teachers to teach reading in engaging and appropriate ways. Discussions with the MOEHE and university staff indicate that these issues, typically seen across Arabic-speaking countries, are also evident in WB&G. A “delivery” model of education, in which the same material is presented in the same way and at the same pace to a class without alignment to their levels or needs, is particularly ineffective for reading, for which progression varies widely among children in the early grades.

Under component 1, “Building Strong Foundational Skills for Learning and Wellbeing”, SERATAC will raise foundational skills and wellbeing of Palestinian primary school students, providing each child with a strong foundation for their future learning. In Phase 1, this will be achieved through (i) the development of an Arabic literacy strategy to set quantifiable goals for children’s Arabic language learning outcomes, along with the roles of key actors, and providing a basis and direction for activities and initiatives to improve literacy teaching and learning; (ii) improvements to early grade Arabic language arts instruction (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) in grades 1–4, including through teacher training and teaching and learning materials; (iii) strengthening of preservice teacher education in classroom practices to improve foundational skills; and (iv) promotion of positive school and classroom climates, including extracurricular activities, so they are conducive to student learning and wellbeing (v) the expansion of public and private provision through the refurbishment and extensions of public KG2 classrooms, and the design and piloting of a public-private partnership (PPP) model.

II. Rationale of the assignment

Cognizant of the importance of children’s formative early years, the Palestinian Authority adopted a National Early Childhood Development (ECD) Strategy in 2017. The strategy identified the low level of qualifications of kindergarten (KG) teachers as a key challenge to improving the quality of KG services in Palestine. To support the implementation of the ECD strategy, under the *Improving ECD in the West Bank and Gaza* Project, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) developed a set of resources to support KG teachers improve the quality of their teaching.

Since the development of the KG teacher resources was completed, the education system in Gaza has effectively collapsed. Schools have suffered extensive destruction, with latest estimates showing that education is the sector most impacted by war in Gaza, experiencing more physical damage and destruction than any other sector. This wholesale destruction of Gaza’s education system has left students unable to access learning for over a year, with young children acutely impacted, having missed out on critical ECE and are experiencing toxic stress detrimental to the developing brain.

III. Objective of the Consultancy

The objective of the consultancy is to support the MoEHE to conduct a comprehensive review of the KG teacher resources developed under the ECD project and adapt the materials for use in Gaza once a ceasefire is reached and large-scale learning can be reinstated.

IV. Scope of work

The consultant will work under the supervision of the Palestinian MoEHE, Ramallah, for an estimated duration of 60 days. The consultant shall be based in Ramallah and will be expected to meet regularly with the MoEHE and key stakeholders to: (1) review existing KG teacher resources developed under the ECD project and propose relevant changes and adaptations to meet the needs of KG teachers in Gaza post-ceasefire, and (2) make the necessary adaptations and revisions to the KG teacher resources. The set

of KG teacher resources developed under the ECD project include: 1) A set of KG2 lesson plans to support teaching and regulate assessment (a total of 18 weekly plans and 108 daily lesson plans); 2) An introductory module for teachers that overviews the use of lesson plans, and 3) a KG toolkit with a package of teaching and learning materials (TLM) to support KGs in implementing lesson plans. A key deliverable of this consultancy is to update and make revisions to this set of KG teacher resources.

Task #1: Review existing KG teacher resources and propose relevant changes and adaptations to meet the needs of KG teachers in Gaza

The consultant will conduct an in-depth review of existing KG teacher resources developed under the ECD project. The review will be focused on the usability and relevance of the KG teacher resources in Gaza post-ceasefire. Key considerations will include, for example, whether the volume of content presented within lesson plans is appropriate, whether the content in the lesson plans themselves remains suitable/relevant in Gaza, and whether additional changes need to be made to the toolkit or introductory teacher module to facilitate the implementation of the revised lesson plans.

The outcome of this review will be a proposal document, approved by the MoEHE, that identifies i) the priority areas for adaptation and revision of the KG teacher resources, and ii) new and additional resources that may need to be developed to support KG teachers.¹ In conducting this review, the consultant is expected to reference relevant background materials including, for example, the Palestinian Teachers Manual, Palestinian ECE Curriculum Framework, Literacy, Numeracy Expectations, and SEL Competencies, and the Situational Analysis of the Quality of Kindergarten Services in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Task #2: Adaptation and revision of KG teacher resources

Based on an approved proposal of changes, the consultant will make revisions to the existing KG teacher resources. This includes, for example, changes to 1) the introductory module to the KG lesson plans, 2) the set of KG lesson plans, and 3) the KG toolkit (including proposed TLMs required to support the implementation of these lesson plans in the context of Gaza). The consultant is expected to submit a proposal to the MoEHE for conducting light-touch consultations and gathering feedback on the proposed updates to these materials—such as through an online survey—from key stakeholders, including teachers in Gaza. Upon approval of this consultations plan, the consultant will work with MoEHE to gather key feedback in accordance to the plan. After consultations, and following final edits to the KG teacher resources, the consultant will deliver an updated set of KG teacher resources to the MoEHE for their review and final approval.

IV. Deliverables and timetable

The consultant will work closely with MOEHE and other relevant stakeholders to produce the following deliverables:

¹ The development of the new and additional resources is not included under this TOR

Deliverable	Description of Deliverable	Proposed Delivery Date
Task #1: Review existing KG teacher resources and propose relevant changes and adaptations to meet the needs of KG teachers in Gaza		
Proposal document on relevant changes and adaptations to KG teacher resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct review of KG teacher resources created under the ECD project, which include: 1) A set of KG2 lesson plans to support teaching and regulate assessment; 2) An introductory module for teachers that overviews the use of lesson plans, and 3) a KG toolkit with a package of TLM to support KGs in implementing lesson plans. • The revision of materials and proposed changes should focus on MHPSS interventions and related guidelines as a main reference. • Produce a proposal document, to be approved by the MoEHE, that presents 1) priority areas for adaptation and revision of the KG teacher resources to fit the context in Gaza, and 2) new and additional resources that may need to be developed to support KG teachers to fit the context in Gaza. The proposed resources should be high-quality, open-source material and/or at no cost. • As needed, refer to relevant background materials including, for example, the Palestinian Teachers Manual, Palestinian ECE Curriculum Framework, Literacy, Numeracy Expectations, and SEL Competencies, and the Quality of Kindergarten Services in the West Bank and Gaza Strip Report (2022). 	February 23 rd , 2025
Task #2: Adaptation and revision of KG teacher resources		
Updated KG teacher resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on an approved proposal of changes (Task #1), the consultant will make adaptations to the existing KG teacher resources. • The consultant will develop a consultations plan to receive feedback on the updated KG teacher resources from key stakeholders – including teachers in Gaza (based on circumstances at the time of implementation). This can be through a light-touch approach such as an online survey link. The consultant will share the consultations plan with the MoEHE and upon approval, will be responsible for implementing this plan, in collaboration with the MoEHE. • The consultant will be expected to produce one final set of resources, in word format, to include an updated: 1) set of KG lesson plans to support teaching and regulate assessment; 2) Introductory module for teachers that overviews the use of lesson plans, and a 3) KG toolkit 	March 31 st , 2025

	with a package of TLM to support KGs in implementing lesson plans.	
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V. Minimum required qualifications

The following competencies, knowledge, and skills will be required:

1. **Education:** A master’s degree from an accredited university in Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Child Psychology, or a related field is required; Graduate Diploma or PhD is preferable.
2. **Relevant Experience:** At least 7 years of demonstrated experience, covering, including but not limited to, the following aspects:
 - Experience in the field of ECE (child pedagogy, early literacy, early numeracy, learning through play, etc.).
 - Experience with INGOs and/ or projects funded by international donors is preferred.
 - Experience in curriculum design and development of training materials for pre-service and/or in-service professional development programs targeting kindergarten and/or basic education teachers.
 - Experience in working on ECE and/or teacher professional development in Palestine.
 - Extensive knowledge of evidence-based best practices relating to teacher professional development programs at kindergarten and/or basic education levels.
 - Strong knowledge of technical tools, resources, and standards related to early childhood development, and education in emergencies and post-conflict settings.
3. **Soft skills:**
 - Excellent written and oral communication skills in Arabic.
 - Excellent organization and time management skills.
 - Excellent report writing skills in Arabic are required, and English are desirable.
 - Professional Working Proficiency in English is desirable.
 - Excellent abilities in using shared drives, Microsoft package, Google forms, Outlook tools and online meeting platforms such as Zoom and Teams.

VI. Time Frame & Type of Contract:

The contract will be for 3 months from January 20th, 2025 until April 20th, 2025. The estimated Level of Effort is (35) man/day.

The consultant will be selected in accordance with the “World Bank Procurement Regulations for Investment Project Financing Borrowers” dated July 2016, revised November 2017, and in August 2018, November 2020, and September 2023 (**Selection of Individual Consultants**).

The contract type is Lump-sum, and the payment will be disbursed upon the delivery of all required deliverables and achieving the anticipated assignment's outcomes, technically acceptable to the Client.

VII. Place of Work:

The consultant will be based at the MOEHE headquarter in Ramallah with regular travel to the involved education district offices, schools, universities, and meetings with other stakeholders and as needed.

VIII. Reporting:

The consultant will work under the supervision and guidance of the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE), Ramallah. The focal point and chief administrative counterpart will be the Director of the Project Coordination Unit. The consultant will report to the PCU Director and the PCU's technical coordinator for early years and will hold biweekly and/or as needed meetings with the unit for the duration of the consultancy.

IX. Client's Input and Counterpart Personnel

During the consultant's mission, the client will provide the consultant with the following:

1. Diploma manuals and related materials.
2. Assessment of the Quality of Kindergarten Services in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
3. Kindergarten Teachers Manual.
4. Kindergarten Curriculum General Framework.
5. Introduction to Lesson Plans.
6. Lesson plans and supporting material.
7. Literacy and Numeracy Expectations.
8. SEL Competencies.
9. List of items in the Toolkits.