

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS/ CONTRACTORS



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| Title: Political Economy Analyst – NOC | WBS/Funding Reference/Activity/IR | Type of engagement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consultant <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Contractor | Workplace of Consultant: Home based and Bangladesh, Dhaka |
| Grant: Enter PBA Code EQUIP-B (SC210628) and the EMDC (SC210630) grants | GL Account: Enter GL Account Code | Fund ID: Enter Fund Code, e.g. SC,SM,GC Non-Grant and SC210628 and SC210630 | |

Background:

Bangladesh has made significant strides in promoting access to schooling for girls. According to the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), both boys and girls now attain about 7 years of schooling. However national learning assessments conducted by the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) show poor literacy and numeracy skills among students – only 25 percent to 44 percent of the students in grades 5 through 8 have mastery over Bangla, English and math. The performance is especially low among poor students. The education sector is also impacted by political economy dynamics particularly, the centralised administration of the education system, increasing concentration of power in political spheres; the limited scope for accountability, and especially related to service delivery access and quality; weak capacity and incentives to pursue critical reforms, as well as the dominance of the civil administration by the ruling party actors, and an increase of levels of high handedness in among the security agencies and judiciary. The centralized power and dysfunction systems manifest at the local implementation level and constrains the reform opportunities.

Regarding the workforce reforms, the teacher training, professional development, deployment, and career pathways are critical to improved learning outcomes in the primary and secondary education sectors. Yet the interests and incentives that are relevant to the education workforce are bound up in larger dynamics of politics, patronage, and accountability mechanisms. An efficient and timely decision making is a critical determinant for the success or failure of policy reforms. Yet, a high degree of centralisation remains a key feature of the education sector in Bangladesh. Increasingly, the lower units have to wait for directives to act on low level decisions and routine administrative tasks owing to the bureaucracy.

In addition, despite a relatively high proportion of government and donor funding to the education sector (especially primary education), the level of educational funding does not meet the international benchmarks for the GDP threshold of 2 per cent investment. Unlike in some other ministries, there is no sector specialisation in the education ministries, with general administration civil servants in key positions. Whereas the Ministry is working on the Education Management Information System (EMIS), the use of data by Government data administration was highlighted by many stakeholders as an area of relatively greater administrative capacity and political opportunity. There is significant senior-level political and administrative buy-in for national and international reporting, using official government data that has been vetted and endorsed by the respective departments.

With the long closure of schools from 17 March 2020 to 11 September 2021 due to COVID-19, an estimated 42 million students from pre-primary to tertiary levels were impacted. In response, the Government of Bangladesh, UNICEF and Development Partners (DPs), quickly established a remote learning system to ensure learning continuity, with lessons broadcast on television and radio, e-content uploaded, and live classes conducted by teachers on online platforms.

Despite the above initiatives however, the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected the education system, deepening the learning crisis and access for most disadvantaged¹ particularly in the rural and remote areas. These children could not be reached equitably by remote learning due to limited access to devices and connectivity. There is substantial losses in learning and increasing drop-out rates, among the marginalized children and girls who have been disproportionately affected by the negative impact of COVID-19 due to their pre-existing vulnerability and multiple deprivations.

Analysis of past experiences of school closures confirm substantial reductions in foundational skills and basic competencies among children, ranging from 11 to 54 per cent. The projections of COVID-19 impact on learning also confirm that without effective medium and long term mitigation strategies, children could lose more than a full year's

¹ FCDO (2021) Business Case Education Quality Improvement Programme – Bangladesh (EQUIP-B)

worth of learning from the over 18-months of school closures as learners lost significant time and content. The school closure in Bangladesh is projected to have caused learning loss, at a minimum, of 19 per cent in primary and 25 per cent in secondary level. This translates into 3.42 million primary students and 2.50 million secondary students – a total of 5.92 million school children at serious learning loss risk.

UNICEF and FCDO collaboration

The United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) in Bangladesh remain a significant partner in the Education Sector, as the country graduates from Least Developed Country status in 2026. In partnership with UNICEF, World Bank, BRAC, and a commercial supplier (to be procured), the FCDO is funding the following two programmes:

1. Educate the Most Disadvantaged Children' in Bangladesh (EMDC)²: The programme provides education support to the poorest, most marginalised children (particularly girls) who still cannot access formal education or who have been forced to drop out-of-school due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It will target children (age 6 to 16) who have either never enrolled or have dropped out of their primary level education.
2. Education Quality Improvement Programme in Bangladesh (EQUIP-B)³: The programme aims to improve the quality of education in primary and secondary level. It will support the government to strengthen the education system's efficiency and effectiveness that results in improving the learning outcomes and enable adolescent girls to stay in secondary school.

The FCDO support will be adapted to match the country's changing capabilities, priorities and needs and will respond to Bangladesh's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by focusing on areas with political traction, clear added value, and high development impact. In partnership with UNICEF, the FCDO will respond to the needs of the sector, to deepen the UK's cooperation and advancing educational opportunities and making a positive contribution by changing lives.

Both EMDC and EQUIP-B interventions are interlinked and require coherent and focused coordination, monitoring and reporting, and implementation for which UNICEF education section proposes to recruit a consultant to undertake a Political Economy Analysis (PEA). The PEA will play a critical role in providing a better understanding of the political and economic constraints and opportunities in delivering the programmes to ensure access and continuity of learning and avoid straight jacket solutions that do not consider the political environment, the interests and incentives of stakeholders involved, and the local context. The PEA is expected to help FCDO and EMDC and EQUIP-B partners to make sense of the political and economic context – and use this understanding to target the factors that may inhibit the attainment of the outcomes of both project.

Broadly, the issues that will be targeted under EMDC are factors that enable: 1) Children who dropped out of primary education due to COVID-19 to catch up with their learning, and have access to go back-to-school/learning centers and continue education to complete the primary cycle; 2) Children who never enrolled, dropped out from primary and/or facing barriers and challenges in accessing formal education complete the primary cycle with foundational skills and nationally defined competencies' and that 3) Non-formal education and life-long learning including out-of-school children are better managed and coordinated by the Bureau of Non-Formal Education with a defined strategy, increased capacity, resources, and accountability.

Under the EQUIP-B, the PEA will ensure that the interventions are strengthened to target: 1) System strengthening for improved gender-responsive, equitable and inclusive environment for learning, including more relevant and better-quality teaching for girls and children with disabilities across primary and secondary schools, 2) Increased accountability through engagement of communities and other stakeholders to improve participation of all children including girls and children with disabilities in primary and secondary schools, and 3) Strengthened data and evidence generation systems to improve decision-making for primary education. The PEA will highlight bottlenecks, and any emerging issues to inform current programmes for course-correction as well as make more informed decisions and improve the quality of delivery of the programmes through the technical assistance which will share shaping priorities aligned to the sector.

² For more info, please visit <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-1-300580/summary>

³ For more info, please see <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-1-301052/summary>

Purpose of Activity/Assignment:

UNICEF seeks a political economy analysis (PEA) consultant to conduct an education sector political economy analysis and integrate the findings into the management and implementation of the two FCDO grants as an ongoing iterative process. The PEA, among other things, aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the sector with a view to shape the current work, inform the programme decision-making, identify entry points for further technical assistance, inform risk management, and enable the partners to respond to the context more effectively.

The PEA will specifically look at the following areas⁴:

- Where are we now? (This includes structural factors and analysis of the current political economy features of the education sector; actors, roles, and responsibilities; ways of working (e.g., rent-seeking and patronage politics); and ways of thinking.
- How did we get here? (This includes political economic pressures/formal and informal rules and institutions governance behavior (e.g., interests and incentives that shape the structure and performance of the education sector).
- What does it mean for improved education quality? [e.g., identify key relationships/actors and agents (e.g., by mapping of stakeholder interest/influence) and how their behaviour affects the education sector.
- Where can we go now? [This includes identifying routes towards tangible reforms considering the analysis such as implications for UNICEF, FCDO and other partners]

The scope of the PEA consultancy will include the provision of hands-on support to UNICEF on implementing the analysis, developing the capacity of staff to integrate thinking and working politically into programme implementation, and developing respective tools. The consultant will also ensure the integration of cross-cutting issues such as gender, disability, and inclusion/exclusion into the analysis to enable UNICEF, FCDO and other implementing partners to better understand the power dynamics and resource distribution in the education sector. With a useful evidence-base to inform the Theory of Change and the Implementation Strategies of the programmes, the political economy analysis will give a greater understanding of context, including barriers to change and how power and decision-making is exercised within the education system. It will identify key political economy risks, and how they can be addressed during procurement, implementation, and monitoring of the programmes including the technical assistance.

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| Budget Year 2022 | Requesting Section/Issuing Office: Education Section | Reasons why consultancy cannot be done by staff: <i>To keep the analysis an independent exercise outside the project implementing team for the deliverables committed under the FCDO's commitment for EQUIP-B and EMDC of US\$34.7M 2021-2026, and additional management support is required.</i> |
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Included in Annual/Rolling Workplan: ☒ Yes ☐ No, please justify:

Consultant sourcing:

☒ National ☐ International

Consultant selection method:

- ☒ Competitive Selection (Roster)
☒ Competitive Selection (Advertisement/Desk Review⁵/Interview)
☐ Single Sourcing (exceptional, only in emergency situations, approval by Head of Office required)

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| Name (in case of single sourcing/extension) | Justification or Refer to NFR (in case of single sourcing/extension) N/A |
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⁴ Adapted from WaterAid Political Economy Analysis Toolkit.

⁵ A Desk Review should only be considered as a selection method when there is a justifiable urgency.

| Work Assignment Overview | | | |
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| Tasks/Milestone: | Deliverables/Outputs: | Timeline 2022/2023 | Estimate Budget |
| Assignment A: conducting PEA study | | | |
| 1. Finalise and agree the PEA methodology, data collection plan and overall approach with UNICEF and FCDO. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inception/initial report that includes assignment workplan and approach. The report should contain a detailed methodology for the study | December 2022 | (3 days) |
| 2. Data collection and consultations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft preliminary report of early observations, data collection and consultations tools for the study. | January 2023 | (10 days) |
| 3. First draft of the Political Economy Analysis followed by a presentation to UNICEF and FCDO partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder consultation workshop to validate the finding Draft Political Economy Analysis Report | February 2023 | (12 days) |
| 4. Final PEA report following feedback by UNICEF and FCDO on the report | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final PEA (no more than 40 pages excluding annexes) | March 2023 | (3 days) |
| Assignment B: PEA capacity development support | | | |
| 5. PEA capacity building plan for EQUIP-B and EMDC project teams in the use of PEA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify partners' PEA capacity needs Develop guidance tools on how to integrate PEA into every programme implementation PEA engagement strategy/approach [no more than 5 pages] | April 2023 | (6 days) |
| 6. Mentoring and follow-up support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a workshop on how to apply PEA tools in programme implementation Hands-on support for implementing the PEA tools (virtual) | May/June 2023 | (10 days) |
| Terms of payment | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Payment, upon completion of each deliverable according to schedule. <input type="checkbox"/> Payment, upon completion of all deliverables at the end of assignment. <input type="checkbox"/> Fee advance, percentage (up to 10 % of total fee) | | |
| Supervisor: Deepa Sankar, Chief of Education Section | Start Date: 01 December 2022 | End Date: 29 May 2022 | Number of Days (working) 44 days |

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| <p>Minimum Qualifications required:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bachelors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Masters <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <p>Enter Disciplines</p> <p>Social sciences, International Relations, Economics, international development, Education, or related fields.</p> | <p>Knowledge/Expertise/Skills required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A minimum of 5 years of relevant work experience. - Proven experience in conducting political economy analysis, preferably on education sector in Bangladesh or developing countries.- Demonstrated experience in training, facilitation, and capacity building - Extensive knowledge and skills of education and social sectors in a developing country context. - High analytical skills using diverse and complex quantitative and qualitative data from a wide range of sources. - Demonstrates, applies, and shares technical knowledge. - Extensive experience in multi-sectoral collaboration and stakeholder coordination in education - Proven experience in drafting and developing multi-stakeholder planning documents - Fluent in English (spoken and written) |
| <p>Administrative details:</p> <p>Visa assistance required: <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Transportation arranged by the office: <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Home Based <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Office Based:</p> <p>If office based, seating arrangement identified: <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>IT and Communication equipment required: <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Internet access required: <input type="checkbox"/></p> |

