

TERMS OF REFERENCE

SHORT TITLE OF ASSIGNMENT

Consultant for Baseline Assessment Survey for Education System Transformation Programme – Solomon Islands

BACKGROUND

The Solomon Islands Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD), in partnership with UNICEF as Grant Agent (GA), and with support from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), has started the implementation of an Education System Transformation program, focusing on improving teaching and learning as a key priority to transform the education system. The transformation agenda aims to improve the quality of teaching and learning across pre-primary, primary, and junior secondary education, with a strong focus on promoting gender equality and inclusion, as outlined in the partnership compact (2023-2027).

The key reform priority areas are aligned with the Education Strategic Framework (2016–2030), the National Education Action Plan (2022–2026), the newly enacted Education Act (2023), and the country's commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF).

In October 2024, MEHRD, in collaboration with UNICEF and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), officially launched the five-year Education Transformation Program (2024–2029). This initiative aims to support 330 schools across the nation, particularly those that have not benefited from teacher professional development in recent years. The program seeks to engage 2,640 teachers, including 1,400 female teachers, by working closely with established education governance structures such as Provincial Education Providers (PEPs) and Provincial Education Coordination Offices (PECO), as outlined in the Education Legislative Framework (ELF 2023).

To collect relevant data and identify key teaching and learning challenges, MEHRD aims to conduct a baseline survey, including literacy, numeracy and social emotional skills, to gain a deeper understanding of the profiles and needs of learners, teachers, and school leaders participating in the planned Professional Development (PD) program under the Systems Transformation Program. This survey, along with the analysis of literacy and numeracy data, will identify gaps in teaching practices, providing insights into how in-service training and professional development programs can address these gaps. The baseline survey is expected to be completed in the first half of 2025.

With support from UNICEF, MEHRD will engage a consultant to collaborate with the MEHRD team in co-designing and conducting the baseline survey, including the assessment of literacy and numeracy. This will involve field visits to schools participating in the PD program and an analysis of the results. The findings will inform the revision and redesign of national PD programs, teacher training, and curriculum content in the Solomon Islands, all aimed at improving learning outcomes for children.

OBJECTIVE / SCOPE OF WORK

The purpose of this consultancy is to support the Solomon Islands Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD) in successfully conducting a baseline assessment survey for the Education System Transformation Grant. This includes the design and development of tools, training of baseline survey teams, and Ministry and Provincial Education Providers, as well as supporting field data collection, data analysis, and reporting.

Scope of Work:

- Conduct a program baseline survey targeting 330 schools across different provinces.
- Conduct literacy and numeracy assessment to identify key learning challenges in the classrooms.

Under the overall leadership and guidance of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD), the Technical Advisor (TA) will work directly with various divisions within the Ministry. This includes the Teaching and Learning Division, the MEHRD Program Coordinator, the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Manager and Officer, Education Providers (EPs), and school leaders. The UNICEF team at the Solomon Islands Multi-country Office will provide technical guidance and support.

Specific tasks

The key deliverables for this assignment are as follows:

- **Inception Report:** Prepare and submit a detailed baseline inception report that outlines the scope, objectives, methodology, proposed sampling, and initial findings from a desk review.
- **Design of Baseline Survey:** Co-design and develop the baseline assessment tools and methodology for data collection and draft a detailed implementation plan across selected schools. This will include assessment of student learning and assessment, school principal/teacher practices and perceptions, school/classroom environment, teaching and learning materials and community and parental engagement.
- **Data Collation, Analysis, and Trainings:** Support data collection and analysis and provide training for MEHRD staff, the baseline team, and EP Officers to enable them to successfully undertake and complete the baseline activities.
- **Conduct Literacy and Numeracy Analysis:** Consult key stakeholders, including Solomon Islands National University (SINU), University of the South Pacific (USP), MEHRD Teaching and Learning Division, School services division, Education Providers (EPs), school leaders, teachers, and local partners, to analyze numeracy teaching and learning. This may include visiting a sample of schools to interview teachers and students and observe targeted lessons which will include observations in various subjects including and not limited to Mathematics and English.
- **Technical Guidance and Recommendations:** Provide technical guidance and recommendations to MEHRD and the program implementation regarding the design and implementation of the baseline survey to inform the design of new teacher professional development program.

Key documents to be reviewed and consulted include:

- National Education Action Plan (NEAP 2022 -2026)
- Solomon Islands Education Management Information System (SIEMIS) reports
- Pacific Island Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA)
- Solomon Islands Standardized Test of Achievement (SISTA)
- System Transformation Program Document
- Reports from the previous MEHRD Literacy Unit (LPMU)
- LEAP report findings and Vernacular pilot reports.
- Previous Solomon Islands PD program evaluations (2022-2023)
- Baseline data of the Inclusive education and Pre-Primary Year roll out in schools

ACTIVITIES, DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINES, PLUS PAYMENT SCHEDULE PER DELIVERABLE

ACTIVITY	DELIVERABLES	ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE	PAYMENT (%)
Inception report	Baseline inception report that outlines the scope, objectives, methodology and initial findings through desk review.		

Design and develop the Baseline methodology, tools and data collection plan with MEHRD,	A comprehensive process to prepare the Baseline Survey tools, methods in collaboration with MEHRD and training of baseline survey team, EPs		
Data collation, Analysis and training of MEHRD staff, program team, and Education Providers (EPs)	Carry out training for MEHRD, baseline team, and EP officers, to enable them to successfully undertake and complete the Baseline activities.		
Conduct Literacy and numeracy analysis (PPY to year 9)	Lead data analysis of data gathered, collaborating with, and supporting key MEHRD staff in this process.		
	Design, Assess and synthesis literacy and numeracy of existing data and collect new data as needed		
Final reports	Produce final baseline survey report & literacy and numeracy analysis		

QUALIFICATIONS, SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE AND ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES

☐ Bachelors ☒ Masters ☐ PhD ☐ Other

Provide details of the expected educational qualifications.

1. Education:

A master's degree in education, monitoring and evaluation, statistics, international development, program management, or a related field is essential.

2. Experience:

- A minimum of 8 years of professional experience is required in one or more of the following areas: program baseline design, evaluation, curriculum design, data analysis, education research.
- Experience and familiarity with the Pacific region, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Solomon Islands context are highly desirable.
- Proven ability to work with a team of experts and stakeholders, including government and non-government authorities at national and sub-national levels is required.
- Experience in working with UNICEF, other UN agency or regional organization is preferred.
- Excellent spoken and written English language skills are required.

3. Skills:

Essential skills for this consultancy include:

- **Analytical Skills:** Ability to analyse data, identify trends, and make informed recommendations based on findings.
- **Communication Skills:** Strong written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to explain ideas or concepts clearly to clients.
- **Problem-solving Skills:** Ability to identify relevant issues, propose solutions, and implement strategies to improve performance.
- **Technical Proficiency:** Expertise in program design, curriculum development, and/or the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy; proficiency with digital tools for analysis and reporting
- **Ethical Standards:** A commitment to ethical standards and professional integrity is critical to maintaining client trust and credibility.

CONDITIONS OF WORK AND CLARIFICATION ON SUPERVISION

The consultant will work directly with the Solomon Islands Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD) and the UNICEF Solomon Islands Education Team. For day-to-day supervision and guidance, the consultant will be overseen by the Education Specialist based in the Solomon Islands, in coordination with the appointed official from the Ministry. The UNICEF Education Specialist will review and approve the deliverables for payment, in consultation with the Pacific Chief of Education and the Chief of Field Office in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

The consultant is expected to travel to the country for in-person work, estimated at 45 days in Honiara and potential selected schools in the provinces over two separate missions (each mission is estimated for 3 weeks), to undertake the assignment, support and collaborate with MEHRD teams and meet with stakeholders, with technical support and guidance from the UNICEF team. When working remotely, the consultant is expected to be available for discussions as required during working hours in the country. All costs associated with the trip are to be included in the total contract value.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

- Individuals engaged under a consultancy contract will not be considered “staff members” under the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and UNICEF’s policies and procedures. They will not be entitled to benefits provided therein (such as leave entitlements and medical insurance coverage). Their conditions of service will be governed by their contract and the General Conditions of Contracts for the Services of Consultants. Consultants are responsible for determining their tax liabilities and for the payment of any taxes and/or duties, in accordance with local or other applicable laws.
- The selected candidate is solely responsible for ensuring that the visa (applicable) and health insurance required to perform the duties of the contract are valid for the entire period of the contract. Selected candidates are subject to confirmation of fully vaccinated status against SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) with a World Health Organization (WHO)-endorsed vaccine, which must be met prior to taking up the assignment. It does not apply to consultants who will work remotely and are not expected to work on or visit UNICEF premises, programme delivery locations or directly interact with communities UNICEF works with, nor to travel to perform functions for UNICEF for the duration of their consultancy contracts.
- UNICEF offers reasonable accommodation for consultants with disabilities. This may include, for example, accessible software, travel assistance for missions or personal attendants. We encourage you to disclose your disability during your application in case you need reasonable accommodation during the selection process and during your assignment.
- No contract may commence unless the contract is signed by both UNICEF and the consultant.
- Consultant will be required to complete mandatory online courses (e.g. Ethics, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Security) upon receipt of offer and before the signature of contract.

GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

- This consultant is for individual consultants only. Candidates are requested to submit a brief technical proposal and CV.
- Candidates are asked to submit a **separate financial offer** along with their application. The financial proposal should be a **lump sum amount for all the deliverables** and should show a breakdown for the following as applicable:
 - Monthly / Daily fees: based on the deliverables in the Terms of Reference above
 - Travel: economy air ticket to include two in-country visits to carry out the assignment
 - Living allowance: where travel is required
 - Miscellaneous: to cover visa, health insurance (including medical evacuation for international consultants), travel insurance, communications, and other costs