**Terms of Reference**

**Review and Stocktaking of the School Career Counseling in West Bank & Gaza**

**Supporting an Education Reform Agenda for improving Teaching, Assessment and Career Pathways (SERATAC)**

**Component 2: Harnessing technology to improve STEM learning and**

**better equip students for the labor market**

# **I. Introduction**

The Ministry of Education 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

Under Component 2, the program will support the development of an effective career guidance system that aims to: (i) help students in identifying, exploring and nurturing their academic talents and interests (with a particular focus on STEM and entrepreneurship, and a special emphasis on overcoming STEM stereotypes along gender lines); and (ii) provide students and their families with timely and personalized information and guidance to make key decisions (i.e., the decision to pursue the TVET or the Academic track in Grade 10, the choice between the Humanities and STEM streams in Grade 11, the selection of a tertiary education major in Grade 12, and the challenging process of entry into the labor market). An effective career guidance system is characterized by three central elements: (i) professional career guidance staff that provide personalized guidance to students at key moments in their educational trajectory; (ii) relevant and timely education and labor market information that is made available to stakeholders; and (iii) meaningful partnerships that open opportunities for students to the “world of work”.[[1]](#footnote-2)

**The Ministry of Education (MOE) is seeking to recruit a Consultant to review and take stock of existing career counseling activities/initiatives/programs in public schools in West Bank & Gaza, to inform MOE on how best to develop an effective career guidance system for all students.**

An invitation is hereby issued to local individual consultants with the required qualifications and experience to apply for this consultancy position.

**II. Objective of the Consultancy**

The objective of the consultancy is to review the existing career guidance and counseling activities/initiatives/programs in public schools in West Bank & Gaza to inform MOE on how best to develop an effective career guidance system for all students.

# **III. Key Policy Questions to be Answered through the Review:**

# The review is expected to answer, among others, the following questions:

* **Human Resources:**
  + How many career counselors/ educational advisors currently exist in public Palestinian schools (disaggregated by gender, served grades, geographic distribution, years on the job), what is their educational/professional background, what is their monthly remuneration?
  + How many hours per day are career counselors/ educational advisors expected to work at each school? Does a school counselor work in one school or more?
  + What is the proportion of school counselors/advisors to number of students /classrooms served? What grades are served?
  + Which schools have career counselors/educational advisors (list of counselors/advisors mapped to specific schools), and how does this compare to the number of schools that need career counseling services (mainly for Grades 9 and 10)?
  + Do other school staff provide similar services (i.e., is there an overlap)? Are these individuals formally trained? How do they provide counseling services?
* **Roles and Responsibilities:**
  + What are career counselors/educational advisors’ responsibilities both in theory (per official job descriptions) and in practice? Are these responsibilities specified by grade or thematic area?
  + How many students does each counselor/ advisor work with? What types of support do the counselors/advisors provide for these students (career, social support, etc.)?
  + Do counselors/advisors work with other school and community actors (parents, school administration, other teachers, community organizations)? If they do so, how?
  + Do they do their counseling at the classroom or individual level, or both? What type of counseling is done at the classroom level? What type of counseling is done at the individual level? If individualized counseling is done, is this counseling based on student’s profile, talents, scores? Is this documented/added to the student profile? Is there targeted individualized support for specific student populations, e.g., at-risk students, school leavers, or dropouts?
  + In reality, to what extent are they able to meet these roles? (Why? What are the constraints?) Are they filling other roles? (Which ones? Why?)
  + Is their career counseling role linked to the local labor market status and needs? Where do they get the information on the labor market?
* **Accountability and Support:** 
  + Who assesses the performance of career counselors/educational advisors? How? How often? Beyond accountability, is there pedagogical support available to career counselors/ educational advisors in the form of mentorship, coaching and/or other means?
  + How is career counseling reflected in the performance evaluation form,? What is its weight compared to the total evaluation of all themes?
  + How many career counseling supervisors/ educational advisors are there in the education district offices and MOE in proportion to the number of career counselors/ educational advisors in schools? What is the structure of said supervisory roles?
* **Materials at their Disposal:** 
  + What materials (manuals, guides, etc.) exist for counselors/advisors? What materials exist for counselors/advisors to use with students? Are these materials useful? Are they currently being used? Are there any existing gaps or needs regarding materials?
  + Do career counselors/ educational advisors have access to any data/platforms related to the labor market needs locally/regionally?
* **Training and professional development:** 
  + What in-service training/induction programs are available to career counselors/ educational advisors? Are there national programs (or just in some schools)? What is the duration of these programs? What is the content? What is the frequency in which counselors/advisors receive these training programs?When were these programs last updated? Who does the training? What is the impact of taking these programs on counselors’/advisors’ progress along the civil service career ladder?
* **Needs:** 
  + What are the key challenges that career counselors/ educational advisors perceive in their work? What are some areas of improvement that career counselors/ educational advisors identify in their work? What are ways in which career counselors/ educational advisors can be supported in their work? What categories of support or help do they identify as important/necessary?

**IV. Methodology**

To answer the above-mentioned questions the consultant is expected to:

1. **Review existing documents and records at the MOE and developed by other development partners, targeting the area of career counseling:**

This includes compiling information, and mapping existing career guidance and counseling training materials, curriculum, policies, and practices. To achieve this, the following subtasks are needed:

* 1. Compile and summarize all career counseling policies and/or directives (including, but not limited to, job description(s), performance evaluation forms, career counseling framework(s)/vision by grade and/or subject) currently used (or recently produced) by the MOE, local universities, and development partners in both the West Bank and Gaza.
  2. Map existing career counseling training materials/resources and programs in the West Bank and Gaza based on a template to be developed by the consultant to be reviewed and approved by the MOE-World Bank STEM team. This will include, for example, presentations, handouts, manuals, guides, training and professionalization programs, online resources, audiovisual materials, sample lesson plans, etc.)
  3. Map existing career guidance materials developed for students in both West Bank and Gaza based on a template to be developed by the consultant to be reviewed and approved by the MOE-World Bank STEM team. This will include, for example, student guides, student curriculum, worksheets, exercises, etc.)
  4. Take stock of the number and type of school links that took place in the 2021-2022 academic year (including, for example, bringing guest speakers to talk about their careers, job fairs, visits to specific industries, etc.)
  5. Review the Palestinian curriculum, guidelines, and the induction programs implemented by MOE/National Institute for Educational Training (NIET) and Directorate General of School Health for newly appointed career counselors/ educational advisors to distill how these documents can inform a potential revision of the career counselors’/ educational advisors’ job description, training and professionalization programs.
  6. Organize and digitize all collected materials in a meaningful way that allows the MOE-World Bank task management team to easily access and understand said materials.

1. **Conduct field visits to schools.**

The consultant will visit a sample of public secondary schools in different geographic areas (West Bank and Gaza) to examine the educational environment and the extent to which the career counselors’ work overlaps with other tasks assigned to them in schools. The sample should be approved by the MOE-World Bank task management team. The consultant should also shadow career counselors/ educational advisors to learn more about their regular working day, and observe counseling sessions (both group sessions and individual sessions, if any). These field visits could additionally help characterize the physical resources available to career counselors/ educational advisors. For example, do they have specific office spaces or areas where they conduct their counseling, what materials do they have at their disposal, do they have interactions or relationships with community members and local industry to help students understand career choices, etc.?

1. **Conduct interviews and focus group discussions.**

The consultant will conduct individual interviews with a sample of career counselors, teachers as well as career leaders in schools without counselors, and district supervisors, principals, parents and students, focusing on Grades 9, 10, 11 and 12.

In addition, the consultant will also organize focus group discussions with career counselors, career leaders, principals and supervisors, and faculty from each of the local universities in the area of education and social sciences that will be involved in the delivery of future training and professionalization program.

The interviews and focus group discussions will follow detailed guidelines, a specific sample, scripts, and questionnaires to be co-developed by the joint MOE-World Bank team.

1. **Summarizing findings in a Technical Report**

The consultant will summarize findings from all tasks in a concise Technical Report (to be produced in both English and Arabic). The report's length should not exceed 50 pages excluding the annexes.

The report shall consist of seven sections as follows:

1. Human Resources
   1. Status quo (in response to the policy questions)
   2. Key identified challenges and needs
   3. Key recommendations for improvement
2. Roles and Responsibilities
   1. Key identified challenges and needs
   2. Key recommendations for improvement
3. Accountability and Support
   1. Key identified challenges and needs
   2. Key recommendations for improvement
4. Materials at their Disposal
   1. Key identified challenges and needs
   2. Key recommendations for improvement
5. Training and professional development
   1. Key identified challenges and needs
   2. Key recommendations for improvement
6. Other
   1. Any other identified challenges and needs
   2. Any other key recommendation(s) for improvement
7. Annexes
   1. Annex 1. Mapping of career counseling training programs and materials
   2. Annex 2. Mapping of career counseling materials for students
   3. Annex 3. Detailed record of school field visits (instrument(s) used, sample, transcript of each visit, summary of findings)
   4. Annex 4. Detailed record of individual interviews (instrument(s) used, sample, transcript of each interview, summary of findings)
   5. Annex 5. Detailed record of focus group discussions (instrument(s) used, sample, transcript of each focus group discussion, summary of findings)

The consultant shall present the report findings in a workshop (or series of workshops) to relevant MOE departments and stakeholders, including the STEM technical committee, the school health department, education district offices, career counseling supervisors, school principals, career counselors'/ educational advisors’ representatives, and development partners, including the World Bank.

A final report shall be submitted to MOE based on the feedback and reflections received from the aforementioned workshop(s). It is expected that the report shall include a recommendation section to inform on the following:

**V. Main Outputs and Deliverables**

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| **Phased out Deliverable** | **Description of Deliverable** |
| 1. Data Collection Plan | The data collection plan should include:   * The analytical framework that will be used to review all documents, develop the instruments and protocols, and analyze the data from the field work. * A list of documents that will be reviewed including those that were prepared by development partners and local organizations in the previous 8-10 years, and available either at the MOE or other development international and national partners. * The proposed sample, instruments and protocols for all field work (school visits, individual interviews, focus group discussions) * A detailed schedule for all planned field work and activities. |
| 2. Documentation from Individual Interviews | * Following an agreed upon sample, the local consultant will organize individual interviews with the following stakeholders from different parts of the West Bank and Gaza: * Career counselors/ educational advisors at public secondary and upper basic schools with grade 9 and above * Public secondary school principals * Education district office supervisors * Students from grade 9 (50% females) * Students from grade 10 (50% females) * Students from grade 11 (50% females) * Students from grade 12 (50% females) * Parents (50% fathers and 50% mothers) * The interviews will be conducted following a detailed protocol; questions and guidelines will be agreed with the MOE-World Bank team. * The local consultant will be tasked with taking detailed notes during the interviews and typing them up in both Arabic and English following a template to be co-developed by the joint MOE-World Bank task management team. |
| 3. Documentation from Focus Group Discussions | * Following an agreed upon sample, the local consultant will organize focus group discussions with the following stakeholders from different parts of the West Bank and Gaza:   + Public secondary schools’ career counselors/ educational advisors and career leaders in West Bank   + Public secondary schools’ career counselors/ educational advisors and career leaders in Gaza   + Public secondary schools’ principals   + Career counseling supervisors.   + Students from grade 9 (50% females)   + Students from grade 10 (50% females)   + Students from grade 11 (50% females)   + Students from grade 12 (50% females)   + Parents (50% fathers and 50% mothers) * The sample for focus groups will differ from the those selected for the individual interviews. Each individual focus group discussion should have a maximum of 15 participants. * The focus group discussions will be moderated by Component 2 technical coordinator or as agreed with the World Bank. * The local consultant will be tasked with taking detailed notes during the discussions and typing them up in both Arabic and English following a template to be co-developed by the joint MOE-World Bank team. |
| 1. Digitized Mapping Career Counseling Training Materials | * The consultant will map existing career counseling training materials/resources and programs in the West Bank and Gaza based on a template to be developed by the consultant to be reviewed and approved by the MOE-World Bank STEM team. This will include, for example, presentations, handouts, manuals, guides, training and professionalization programs, online resources, audiovisual materials, sample lesson plans, etc.). Collected materials should be digitized by the consultant and compiled in a way such that they can be easily accessed by the MOE-World Bank team. * The mapping will lay out the content covered, methodology/approaches, and other relevant aspects the training materials, following a template to be provided by the joint MOE-World Bank team. |
| 1. Technical Report | The report shall consist of seven sections as follows:   1. Human Resources    1. Status quo (in response to the policy questions)    2. Key identified challenges and needs    3. Key recommendations for improvement 2. Roles and Responsibilities    1. Key identified challenges and needs    2. Key recommendations for improvement 3. Accountability and Support    1. Key identified challenges and needs    2. Key recommendations for improvement 4. Materials at their Disposal    1. Key identified challenges and needs    2. Key recommendations for improvement 5. Training and professional development    1. Key identified challenges and needs    2. Key recommendations for improvement 6. Other    1. Any other identified challenges and needs    2. Any other key recommendation(s) for improvement 7. Annexes    1. Annex 1. Mapping of career counseling training programs and materials    2. Annex 2. Mapping of career counseling materials for students    3. Annex 3. Detailed record of school field visits (instrument(s) used, sample, transcript of each visit, summary of findings)    4. Annex 4. Detailed record of individual interviews (instrument(s) used, sample, transcript of each interview, summary of findings)    5. Annex 5. Detailed record of focus group discussions (instrument(s) used, sample, transcript of each focus group discussion, summary of findings) |

# **VI. Minimum Required Qualifications**

* At least a master’s degree in education, social sciences or any other related field.
* A minimum of 7 years work in research carrying out qualitative research (including interviews, focus groups and field visits). School counseling and education career counseling areas is a plus.
* Proven experience in conducting similar assignments.
* Ability to gather, organize, analyze and report field data and other desk review data.
* Fluency in English is a must for communicating and reporting.
* Good presentation skills, report writing skills, planning and analysis skills in both Arabic and English.
* Excellent computer skills, including effective use of Word, Power Point and Excel, as well as digital filing (for example, Google Drive or Dropbox)

**VII. Estimated Timeframe and level of effort**

The consultant is expected to work from October 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022 with an expected level of effort of 40 staff days. The consultant maybe be required to travel to education District Offices, and to upper basic and secondary public schools in different geographic areas in West Bank.

# **VIII. Type of Contract**

This is a lump sum contract.

# **IX. Institutional Arrangements**

* The consultant will work under the supervision and guidance of the Palestinian Ministry of Education, Ramallah. The focal point and the administrative counterpart will be the Director of the Project Coordination Unit (PCU), and the Assistant Deputy for Educational Affairs, who acts as the focal point for Component 2 of the program.
* The joint MOE-World Bank Component 2 task management team will serve as the central consultative body to review and provide feedback on draft deliverables.
* The MOE will provide the consultant with assistance in identifying the selected individuals and groups for interviews and focus groups, and in scheduling meetings and site visits to education district offices and schools and wherever needed. The MOE will also provide the needed logistics to conduct meetings and focus groups. When necessary, suitable office space will be made available. The MOE will provide background information about career guidance, relevant previous reports, manuals, guidelines and curriculum materials, and other project documents.

1. OECD, 2021. How Youth Explore, Experience and Think about Their Future. A New Look at Effective Career Guidance. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)