

**REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (REOI)
CONSULTANT’S QUALIFICATIONS BASED SELECTION
(CQS)**



HIRING OF CONSULTANT FIRM

FOR

**Third-Party Verification (TPV) of
Disbursement Condition 1 (DC 1 / Trigger 1):
‘Financial Phasing Model’ and revision of the Non-Salary Budget
(NSB) Formula**

**Programme Monitoring & Implementation Unit (PMIU)
Getting Result: Access and Delivery of Quality Education Services - System
Transformation in Punjab
(GRADES-STP)
School Education Department, Govt. of the Punjab**

October 2026

Terms of Reference (TOR)

Project:	Getting Result: Access and Delivery of Quality Education Services - System Transformation in Punjab (GRADES-STP) Project
Client:	PMIU, School Education Department (SED), Government of Punjab
Assignment:	Third Party Verification of Disbursement Condition 1 (DC 1 / Trigger 1): 'Financial Phasing Model' and revision of the Non-Salary Budget (NSB) Formula

1. Background

The GRADES-STP Project is financed by a Global Partnership for Education (GPE), with the World Bank as Grant Agent. It aims to improve access, learning outcomes and system efficiency in Punjab's public education system. Alongside its investment components, the Project includes two Disbursement Conditions (DCs), also referred to as triggers. The funds tagged to each DC (US\$4,785,700 each) are released only when the Government of Punjab has achieved all conditions under that DC using non- GRADES-STP funds.

This assignment covers DC 1 (Trigger 1): 'Financial Phasing Model' and revision of the Non-Salary Budget (NSB) Formula, under Category (2) of the Grant Agreement. DC 1 supports the revision of the Non-Salary Budget (NSB) formula for more equitable distribution of funds across all schooling levels (by revising the relative shares of the primary and middle levels vis-à-vis high schools), and the use of NSB for school-based hiring of teachers against vacant posts in primary schools.

As set out in the Project Appraisal Document (PAD), achievement of the DCs is subject to third-party verification. The PMIU provides supporting evidence, and the TPV firm verifies it independently. Following confirmation from the TPV firm, the World Bank determines whether the conditions have been met in a form, substance and/or manner satisfactory to the Bank, and authorizes withdrawal of the DC-tagged funds. The TPV firm's report is therefore the evidence on which the Bank's decision rests; it does not itself constitute the Bank's confirmation.

The assignment will primarily be a desk-based verification of documentary and system-generated evidence submitted by the implementing agencies (SED, District Education Authorities and PMIU, and the Finance Department where relevant). For conditions (iii) and (iv), which concern disbursements to schools and the recruitment of teachers at scale, the desk review will be complemented by limited, sample-based field and telephonic verification, as described in Section 4.

2. Objectives

- To independently verify the achievement of each of the four conditions under DC 1 (Trigger 1) through review of evidence submitted by the implementing agencies, supplemented by sample-based field and telephonic checks for conditions (iii) and (iv).
- Ensure compliance with the verification requirements defined in the Project Appraisal Document (PAD), the Grant Agreement, and World Bank guidelines.
- To prepare and submit a verification report certifying, for each condition, whether it has been achieved (or otherwise), with the evidence relied on, any gaps or discrepancies found and, for quantitative conditions, the extent of achievement.

3. Scope of Work

DC 1 (Trigger 1): More Equitable Allocations for School Budgets

Conditions

- i. SED has notified the revision of the NSB formula for more equitable distribution of funds across all schooling levels;
- ii. SED has notified school-based hiring to fill vacant posts in primary schools using NSB;
- iii. Disbursement of the NSB has been made to schools in accordance with the revised NSB formula in the school year immediately following or within the same school year (whichever comes first) that the NSB formula is revised; and
- iv. 25,000 new teachers for the vacant posts have been recruited through the school-based hiring intervention within the first two years of the Project;

Conditions to be verified: (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv)

Note: All four conditions must be met before the DC 1 funds can be released. The firm shall report on each condition separately, so that the Bank can see which conditions have been met and which, if any, are outstanding.

Condition (i): SED has notified the revision of the NSB formula for more equitable distribution of funds across all schooling levels

The TPV firm shall verify:

- The official notification by SED of the revised NSB formula, including its date and issuing authority.
- Approval of the revised NSB formula by the Provincial Cabinet (e.g., cabinet decision, minutes or approved extract), including its date, and confirmation that the SED notification is consistent with the approved formula.
- The revised formula compared with the previous formula, confirming whether the relative shares of the primary and middle levels have increased.

Condition (ii): SED has notified school-based hiring to fill vacant posts in primary schools using NSB

The TPV firm shall verify:

- The official notification/letter by the SED/DEA of school-based hiring, including its date and issuing authority.

Condition (iii): Disbursement of the NSB has been made to schools in accordance with the revised NSB formula in the school year immediately following or within the same school year (whichever comes first) that the NSB formula is revised

The TPV firm shall verify:

- **Allocation:** The TPV firm shall verify that school-wise allocations for School Year 2026-27 were calculated in accordance with the revised NSB formula and that the revised formula was applied to determine allocations.
- **Disbursement:** The TPV firm shall verify that funds were disbursed to schools in accordance with the revised NSB formula during School Year 2026-27 by reviewing allocation records, release and transfer records (e.g., Finance Department releases, Assignment Account statements, bank advice, or system-generated transfer reports), and other supporting financial documentation, and comparing actual disbursements with approved school-wise allocations.
- **Sample confirmation:** Field-based sample verification (Section 4).

Condition (iv): 25,000 new teachers for the vacant posts have been recruited through the school-based hiring intervention; all in a form, substance, and/or manner satisfactory to the Bank.

The TPV firm shall verify:

- **Teacher list:** a teacher-level list of all teachers recruited through school-based hiring, giving name, CNIC, school EMIS code, school level, post, date of appointment and source of salary.
- **Data integrity checks:** The TPV firm shall review the teacher and caregiver lists for duplicate CNICs, duplicate records, and other data inconsistencies. Following data cleaning, the finalized lists shall be cross-checked against relevant government HRMIS, payroll, and personnel records to verify that reported recruits are genuine new hires and are not existing government employees already on the payroll.
- **Caregiver list:** A caregiver-level list of all caregivers recruited through school-based hiring, giving name, CNIC, school EMIS code, school level, post, date of appointment and source of salary.
- **Eligibility:** count only teachers and other staff who meet all of the following: (a) hired against a vacant post in a primary school (including the primary sections of elementary, high and higher secondary schools); (b) hired under school-based hiring as defined in the Grant Agreement, i.e., the contractual hiring of teachers, school teacher interns, caregivers and temporary teachers by School Councils using the NSB available at their disposal; and (c) a new recruit, not an existing government employee or a re-appointment.
- **Sample confirmation:** Verification of newly appointed teachers and caregivers will be conducted through a stratified random sample, disaggregated by district, school type, and gender, using school visits and telephone interviews. The share of invalid cases found in the sample shall be deducted from the reported number of recruitments.

4. Methodology

The firm shall propose a comprehensive methodology for undertaking the assignment. The methodology shall, at a minimum, include:

- **Desk Review:** Review and verification of relevant documents, records, electronic datasets and other supporting evidence against the prescribed conditions
- **Field/Telephonic Verification:** The assignment shall include verification of approximately 400 schools, comprising 100 field-based verifications and 300 telephonic verifications. The sample shall cover six districts with representation across North, Central, and South Punjab, as well as urban and rural locations, school type and gender. The firm shall propose and justify the sampling methodology, allocation and coverage. The final sampling design shall be reviewed and agreed by PMIU and the World Bank prior to commencement of field verification activities.

The firm shall ensure independence and objectivity throughout the verification process and maintain confidentiality and security of all data obtained during the assignment. The detailed methodology, verification tools and work plan shall be finalized in consultation with PMIU as part of the Inception Report.

5. Schedule of Deliverables

Sr. No.	Deliverable	Description	Timeline
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1.	Inception Report	The inception report, including the verification methodology, verification matrix for each condition (evidence, verification method, and assessment criteria), sampling design for field and telephonic verification, data requirements, and detailed work plan, shall be submitted and shared simultaneously with PMIU and the World Bank for review and comments.	Within one week of contract award
2.	Desk Review Findings Summary	A summary table of evidence reviewed and desk-review findings for conditions	After two weeks of contract award
3.	Draft Verification Report	A comprehensive report covering all four conditions under DC-1, integrating findings from desk review, field verification, and telephonic verification. The report shall assess compliance against the agreed verification criteria, identify any gaps or issues, and provide a clear determination on whether each condition has been fulfilled. The draft verification report shall be submitted simultaneously to PMIU and the World Bank for review and feedback.	Within three weeks of contract award
4.	Final Verification Report	Final report after incorporating feedback from PMIU, with the verified school list (condition iii) and verified teacher list (condition iv) annexed.	Within four weeks of contract award

6. Reporting and Supervision

- The TPV firm will report to the Programme Director.
- All deliverables will be reviewed and approved by PMIU.
- Key deliverables, including the Inception Report and Draft Verification Report, shall be shared concurrently with PMIU and the World Bank. Comments received from both parties shall be addressed before submission of the Final Verification Report.
- The final verification report will be shared by PMIU with the World Bank as supporting evidence for the Bank's confirmation of DC 1.

7. Duration of Assignment

The firm will be engaged for a period of four (4) weeks.

8. Experience and Qualification of Firm

Sr. No.	Criteria
1	Experience:

1.1	Overall experience of five (05) years in undertaking advisory services in areas of monitoring, assessing, validation/verification of indicators and evaluating public and/or private sector community development and facility based social service programs of scale
2	Relevant Experience:
2.1	At least two (02) similar and related to the public sector (preferably education sector) assignments should be successfully completed. Experience in verifying and tracking DLIs/PBCs or similar results-based achievements in foreign funded programs, will be accorded due weightage. (evidence in the form of work awards/contracts must be provided for evaluating relevant experience)
3	Technical and Managerial Capacity: The technical and managerial structure of the firm (only the structure of the organization, general qualifications, are indicated). CVs are not required for shortlisting.

Staffing Requirements

Key Experts

Team Leader

- Doctoral or M.Phil. degree in social sciences, public or business administration or a professional qualification i.e. CA, ACCA, CFA or equivalent, with 15 years of experience in audit and assurance, monitoring and evaluation, third-party verification, or a related field.
- Experience and demonstrated ability managing large-scale data collection, verification or assurance engagements, analysis and report writing.
- Proven ability to facilitate communication between different stakeholders, government, non-government, and academic institutions.

Audit and Data Manager

- A Master’s degree (minimum sixteen years of education) in statistics, economics, or related professional qualification with a demonstrated experience of at least 5 years of experience in designing and implementing data quality assurance mechanisms (e.g., validation checks, consistency checks, error detection).
- Proven experience in **audit planning, risk assessment, internal controls, and implementation of audit procedures.**
- **Demonstrated expertise in evaluation of audit findings, and preparation, compilation, and presentation of comprehensive reports.**
- Experience in reconciling allocation lists with release and transfer records (e.g., Finance Department releases, Assignment Account and bank statements) and in verifying disbursements to schools.

Non-Key Experts

Field Assistants

- At minimum, a bachelor’s degree (14 years of education) in social sciences, or related subjects.
- Three (03) years’ previous experience conducting large facility-level surveys, field verification, and field audits/surveys in public or private sector organisations.
- Knowledge of the varying cultural context/sensitivities throughout the country and provinces.
- Ability to communicate in English, Urdu, and Punjabi.
- Demonstrated ability to conduct a survey.

9. Selection Method

A Consulting firm will be selected in accordance with the Consultant Qualification Selection (CQS) method set out in the World Bank's Procurement Regulations for Borrowers for Consulting Services September 2023 (Procurement Regulations). The Project will be subject to the World Bank's Anticorruption Guidelines, dated October 15, 2006, revised in January 2011 and July 2016. The selected consulting firm shall not be eligible to undertake subsequent non-consulting services arising directly from this assignment, including campaign production and media placement, in accordance with the applicable World Bank Procurement Regulations.
