

Call for Consultancy
National Consultant
Support to ASER Learning Assessment of student outcomes

Date Issued: 1st May 2024

Organization: UNESCO Antenna Office in Yangon

Duration: June 2024 to September 2024 (may be applicable for an additional month extension)

Start Date: 4th June 2024 (Estimation)

Application Deadline: 16th May 2024

Terms of Reference

I. Background

Under the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Education Sector Program Implementation Grant (ESPIG), UNESCO has secured funding to implement activities towards the attainment of the undermentioned three (3) outcome areas.

- A. **Outcome 1:** Ensuring safe and equitable access to learning for children and youth in Myanmar;
- B. **Outcome 2:** Ensuring quality teaching and learning for children and youth in Myanmar by strengthening the capacities of education staff and fostering context-responsive, equity-focused learning resources and modalities adapted to the evolving situation; and
- C. **Outcome3:** Ensuring systems strengthening, management, coordination, and monitoring.

These outcomes contribute to the long-term goal of ESPIG which is ensuring that children and youth in Myanmar can re-engage in quality, meaningful, inclusive and gender-responsive learning in safe, protective environments, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable learners. Under ESPIG, UNESCO along with other Grant Agents (GAs) will conduct two (2) Learning Assessments over the implementation period 2024 – 2026 using the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) Survey. At a minimum, the GAs will ensure a baseline and endline survey is delivered over the three-year period of the ESPIG. Each GA will administer the ASER survey in a coordinated, but independent manner. In the case of UNESCO, a third party will be contracted to administer the learning assessment. The results will feed into Outcome 2 reporting of the joint results framework for the indicator *“number of girls, boys, and youth (ages 3-18) with improved literacy and numeracy skills”*, noting that the assessment will focus on children ages 6-15 years old.

The first learning assessment, expected to commence at the start of the 2024/25 academic term (June 2024) will establish a baseline of data to enable GAs to monitor children’s progress throughout the project duration and measure their impact on children’s learning in the subsequent learning assessment. The results of the ASER Survey will provide the GAs and their partners with an understanding of the literacy and numeracy levels of children, so that teaching methods and materials can be adapted to enable them to start from their current level and build towards the learning levels appropriate for their age and grade.

II. Work Assignment

The Contractor will perform the tasks under the overall authority of the Director of UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok, the direct supervision of the Head of Office, UNESCO Antenna Office in Yangon, and in close collaboration with the ESPIG programme team. The Contractor is expected to support UNESCO in coordinating the learning assessment with partners, fact checking the learning assessment data and working closely with the contractor leading on the administering of the ASER survey. Activities include but are not necessarily limited to the following tasks:

1. Support the planning, coordination, and preparation for ASER learning assessment implementation, including development of test schedules, training schedules, cost calculation and review and translation of documents and other reference materials. This would require coordination with UNESCO's partners and the contractor administering the learning assessment on behalf of UNESCO.
2. Support field monitoring (virtually) of the data collection and implementation of the learning assessment across Sagaing, Mandalay, Yangon, and Bago. This includes coordination with partners to identify appropriate times for the training of staff on the ASER learning assessment. The exact states/regions are subject to change depending on the security situation in country.
3. Support the finalization of the ASER learning assessment report, including reviewing the draft report and collating UNESCO's feedback.
4. Support the ESPIG programme team who will provide key technical assistance for the ASER learning assessment and the related tasks.
5. Coordination with UNESCO's partners, the contractor administering the learning assessment on behalf of UNESCO and other key stakeholders, including support to the documentation and preparation of data sets; and
6. Provide technical translation and interpretation during meetings for English and Myanmar language and vice versa, as needed.

III. Methodology of the ASER Survey

ESPIG GAs agreed that each GA will administer the ASER Survey in a coordinated, but independent manner, with the modality to be determined by each GA. In the case of UNESCO, a third party will be contracted to support the administering of the learning assessment. The ASER Survey, which is also available in Myanmar language, has already been tested in the country by different partners (including PiN, SCI and others) and by UNICEF, SCI, and others globally in different contexts. Based on the previous successful experiences with this tool in Myanmar and its widespread international recognition as an effective measure of learning assessment in emergency settings, GAs agreed to adopt this tool for the learning assessment exercises planned under the ESPIG

The purpose of ASER is two-fold: (i) to obtain reliable estimates of the status of children's schooling and foundational learning (reading and math ability); and (ii) to measure the change in these basic learning and school statistics over time.

The ASER Survey in Myanmar will be used to assess the basic literacy and numeracy skills of children (6-15 years old) who have participated in at least one year of an ESPIG-funded education programme managed by any of the three GAs.

- A. The Survey tests basic literacy skills through a simple reading tool with four tasks:
 - 1) Letters: Set of commonly used letters.

- 2) Words: Common, familiar words with 2 letters and 1 or 2 vowels.
- 3) Standard I level text: Set of 4 simple linked sentences, each having no more than 6 words.
- 4) Standard II level text: A short story with 7-10 sentences. Sentence construction is straightforward, words are common, and the context is familiar to children.

B. Similarly, the arithmetic tool consists of the following four tasks:

- 1) Number recognition 1 to 9.
- 2) Number recognition 11 to 99.
- 3) Subtraction: 2-digit numerical subtraction problems with borrowing.
- 4) Division: 3-digit by 1-digit numerical division problems with remainder.

A tentative sample of 3,000 students ages 6 – 12 will be targeted by UNESCO across Sagaing, Mandalay, Yangon, Bago. The exact states/regions are subject to change depending on the security situation in country. The sampling strategy used in ASER is designed to generate a representative picture of the States/Regions and Townships benefiting from the ESPIG. The selection of children to be tested will likewise ensure a representative and credible sample size, to be finalized at the time of the assessment, and will include 50 per cent girls and a percentage of children with disabilities proportional to overall enrolment figures.

IV. Deliverables and Timeline

1. Testing schedules for the administering of the learning assessment across the identified States/Regions by 30th June 2024.
2. Report on the field monitoring of the data collection and implementation of the ASER learning assessments in Sagaing and Mandalay, by 31st July 2024.
3. Report on the field monitoring of the data collection and implementation of the ASER learning assessments in Yangon and Bago, by 31st August 2024.
4. Feedback/inputs on the first draft of the learning assessment report and accompanying PPT, and by 30th September 2024.
5. Establish database and knowledge management system (using SharePoint) for learning assessment, ensuring all records are stored and easily identifiable by 30th September 2024.

V. Location and travel

The individual consultant will be partially home-based. She/he is required to telework from home with occasional work at the UNESCO Myanmar Project Office.

VI. Fees

The lump sum is established on the basis of a daily or monthly rate based on UNESCO rules and regulations on Level of Assignment and Remuneration and depending on qualifications.

VII. Qualifications for Specialized Knowledge/Experience

Required qualifications

- A bachelor's degree in education, international development, management, economics, statistics or a related field.

- At least 3 years' experience in the international development (education) sector, including supporting either learning assessments, evaluations or major quantitative research studies.
- Advanced understanding of Microsoft Excel.
- Strong understanding of and familiarity working with complex data sets.
- Familiarity with the education development context in Myanmar, including working with non-government education providers.
- Adaptability and flexibility in working approach.

Desirable qualifications

- Advanced understanding of Power BI
- Experience working with CSO and /or other UN agencies and INGOs.

VIII. How to apply

Interested applicants are invited to submit in writing to the UNESCO Myanmar Project Office:

- **Technical Proposal** clearly referencing “**National Consultant- Support for ASER Learning Assessment**”, 1) how your qualifications and experience make you suitable for the position, 2) updated CV with contact detail of three referees; and 3) your approach to undertaking the assignment.
- **Financial proposal** indicating the expected consultancy fee in USD.

UNESCO places great emphasis on ensuring that the objectives of the work assignment, as described in the Terms of Reference, are met. Accordingly, in evaluating the applications for the assignment, attention will focus first and foremost on the technical elements. From those proposals deemed suitable in terms of the criteria in the Terms of Reference, UNESCO shall select the proposal that offers the Organization best value for money.

Your application should reach yangon@unesco.org by email no later than 17:00 Hours (Yangon time) on 16th May 2024.

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted