**Swiss Cooperation Office Afghanistan**

# Terms of Reference

**Consultancy for the External Review of Afghanistan Balanced Education project (BALEDU) and SDC’s possible engagement in the Education Cannot Wait trust fund**

Mandate: Consultancy for the External Review of Afghanistan Balanced Education (BALEDU) project and SDC’s possible engagement in the Education Cannot Wait trust fund

Contracting body: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Locations: Afghanistan: Kabul and Badakhshan province

Duration: 26 working days during the months of August - September 2019 (tentative)

Announcement date: 1st of July 2019

Closing date: 18th of July 2019

Start date: 18th of August 2019 (tentatively)

## 1. Background

### 1.1. Context

Since 2001, the Ministry of Education (MoE) in Afghanistan has made significant progress in expanding access to education and in enabling 8.9 million of children (38% girls) to enrol in schools. Despite the achievements of the last decade, there is widespread acknowledgement that much more remains to be done on access and quality. The estimated numbers of out of school children are 3.7 million, among them girls are in majority. Around half of the teachers do not have the required qualifications and the effective teaching skills. This is one of the major challenge for quality education in Afghanistan.

The third National Education Strategy Plan (NESP III) of MoE is aiming to improve the quality, access and management of education. The priority is to improve learning environments, increase the quality and relevance of curriculum, and to prepare graduates better for productive work.

The Education Quality Reform Programme for Afghanistan, implemented by the MoE and the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) and funded under the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), was launched in 2018. It aims to improve equitable access to basic education by building 1’946 new schools and by renovating 700 existing schools, as well as addressing issues of quality and relevance by developing curriculum and learning materials and by training teachers.

In addition, the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) trust fund, which is a multi-year response programme was officially launched in late 2018. The ECW targets the most vulnerable children in Afghanistan, with a particular focus on girls, internally displaced and refugee children.

### 1.2. Switzerland’s strategic orientation as per the Country Strategy 2019-2022

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is the Development Agency of Switzerland’s Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and responsible for the overall coordination of Switzerland’s international development activities and cooperation in Afghanistan. SDC considers investments in quality education services as a key priority area in the long-term development of the very young Afghan population. SDC’s aim is that girls and boys benefit from safe, equitable and relevant quality basic education.

SDC intends to contribute to national priorities, to address the economic and social dimensions of fragility, with both protection and inclusion, by considering the importance of education for social cohesion and economic development.

The following strategic outcomes are envisaged for the period 2019-2022:

1. Girls and boys, including in emergencies, have increased access to safe and quality education
2. Education authorities, academic supervisors, teachers and administrators provide better services

SDC’s interventions at the local level work towards promoting community involvement in education to achieve safe and conducive learning environments and increase enrolment. SDC helps vulnerable and conflict-affected children to access education and protection.

Interventions are focusing on strengthening the education system to provide schools and teachers with guidance, on enhancing the quality and relevance of education and on improving linkages between non-formal education and the formal school system.

The funds allocated for education projects corresponds to approximately 18% of the total SDC budget in Afghanistan.

### 1.3. SDC’s current engagement in education

SDC has been supporting education projects in Afghanistan since 2003. SDC is a comparatively small donor in the context of Afghanistan, but remains firmly committed to continue its support to the Afghan people and state. SDC is actively engaged in education-related policy dialogue and donor coordination.

SDC together with the German Government, are currently funding the Afghanistan Balanced Education Program (BALEDU, 2012-2019) implemented by GIZ. The overall objective of this program is to improve teacher qualifications through substantial professional and technical support to MoE with an ultimate aim to enhance students learning outcomes. The project intends to achieve this objective through four main interventions implemented at local, regional and national level: 1) introduction of specialised primary school teacher training; 2) qualification of lecturers at teacher training colleges (TTCs); 3) strengthening of the system for ensuring the quality of teaching, and 4) anchoring of gender and human rights as part of the teacher training.

The first field of activity strengthens the capacities of the Teacher Education Directorate (TED) of MoE through the introduction of a specialised diploma course for primary school teachers, that focuses on years 1 to 6. The second field of activity trains TTC lecturers in the use of subject-specific didactics and learner-centred teaching methods, thus enabling comprehensive modernisation of their teaching. The third field of activity works to strengthen the system for sustainably securing the quality of teaching. In the fourth field of activity, gender and human rights are integrated in teacher training.

Phase 3 of BALEDU will end by October 2019 and the program will not be continued.

## 2. Objective and Scope of the Review

### 2.1. Purpose

The main purpose of this review is to:

* Explore the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of BALEDU phase 3 project
* Inform SDC on the potential to engage with the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) multiyear pooled funding programme

### 2.2. Review Questions

While focusing on the above-mentioned purpose, the review team should give well-defined answers to the following key questions:

1. Strengths and weaknesses of BALEDU:
	1. What worked especially well, what didn’t and why?
	2. Is the project relevant to the needs in the education sector; is it coherent with national priorities and the global agenda?
	3. How effective has been the collaboration with relevant governmental departments of MoE, especially TTC?
	4. Is the project implemented effectively and efficiently? Does it do the right things and the things right?
	5. Is the project sustainable?
	6. What could be done to improve sustainability?
	7. To what extend the SDC crosscutting themes (gender and governance) have been considered during implementation?
	8. What are key lessons learned from the project, which should be taken into account in future interventions?
2. Review the potential for SDC to engage with the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) trust fund
	1. Who are the main donors and actors in the ECW multi-year response programme?
	2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the strategic and operational structures as well as of the implementation approach of the ECW trust fund?
	3. What are the current measures that ensure a nexus between development and humanitarian aid?
	4. What are the potentials and risks for SDC to engage with the ECW trust fund?
	5. Is the on budget modality suitable for the humanitarian response?

## 3. Methodology

The review team shall conduct a desk review of relevant global, national and SDC internal policies, strategies, project documents and plans in connection with the purpose of the review.

In Kabul, the review team will meet with the SDC management and relevant program staff. As appropriate, in connection with the purpose of the study the team will meet with SDC’s partners, project beneficiaries, donors, ministry of education, international organizations, implementing agencies/NGOs, selected representatives from civil society organizations, Teacher Education Directorate and individuals.

In Badakhshan, the review team will meet with TTC director, lecturers, and students. The team shall also meet with PED academic supervisors and schools teachers at the experimental schools.

In addition, teachers, lecturers and students from other field locations can be interviewed via Skype.

The review team, nevertheless, is allowed to revisit the proposed methodology and come up with a modify/revised methodology, shall the review team feel such a need. In any case, the review team shall submit to SDC a work plan of its proposed methodology with the following information:

* A specific and time bound work plan within the suggested timeframe
* Details of how the review will take place
* Reporting, debriefing

It is anticipated that the review team will present its methodology and detailed work plan to a joint meeting (briefing) attended by SDC and GIZ prior to commence the review.

## 4. Deliverables

The review team is expected to produce the following specific outputs:

1. A brief inception report detailing how the review will be conducted, including key research questions and methodology aligned with the objective and scope of the study, as well as a work plan and a list of potential interviewees.
2. Briefing and presenting the work plan, methodologies, procedures etc. to SDC and GIZ in Kabul prior to the start of the review process.
3. De-briefing at the end of the review in Kabul presenting SDC and GIZ the initial findings and recommendations.
4. A draft report, providing comprehensive and well-structured information and answering the review questions outlined above.
5. A final report, taking into account SDC’s and GIZ’s comments and feedback on the draft report.

The External Review Report should not exceed 30 pages and summarize the key findings and recommendations, and comprised of at least the following parts:

1. Executive summary (not to exceed 3 pages);
2. Overview of the mandate;
3. Key issues, findings and recommendations on all elements of the external review;
4. Conclusion;
5. The document(s) shall be delivered in electronic format (Ms. Word and Excel) and in English.

## 5. Required Expertise and Skills/ Team Composition

This assignment is for a team of two to three consultants (international and national, female and male) with solid expertise in the education sector in general and in particular in Afghanistan and/or similar contexts as well as in monitoring and evaluation of development projects.

In particular, the team should have the following expertise and skills:

* Advanced degree in a relevant field;
* Proven experience in conducting reviews / studies and impact assessment of development projects in the education sector;
* In-depth knowledge of the Afghan education policy framework and institutional landscape in particular;
* Technical expertise in effective educational development project management;
* Good knowledge and experience on education reforms;
* Good interpersonal skills and time management
* Ability to present information in a transparent and comprehensive manner;
* Written and spoken fluency in English

## 6. Logistics and Security

The team must be able to arrange logistics (transport, accommodation, and visa) on its own account. SDC will support the team in the visa process upon request. SDC will also facilitate access to relevant information, organizations and stakeholders upon request.

The team is responsible for its own safety and the safety of its staff (including relevant insurances). SDC is not liable for any kind of damage to staff or property and cannot be held accountable for any claims or costs related to injury, death, and loss of or damage to property. SDC will facilitate access to security related information and provide the team with a security briefing upon request.

## 7. Timeframe

The external review shall be conducted within a maximum of 26 days in August-September 2019, as outlined below:

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| **Work** | **No. of days** |
| Preparatory works (work plan, methodologies, timeframe etc.)  | 2 days  |
| Desk review | 4 days |
| Inception report | 1 day |
| Briefing in Kabul | ½ day |
| Meetings and data collection in Kabul | 6 days  |
| Field visits including travel days | 3 days |
| Debriefing in Kabul | ½ day |
| International travel (if applicable)  | 2 days  |
| Report writing (draft and final) | 7 days  |
| **Total no. of working days.**  | **26 days**  |

## 8. Submission Guideline

Interested consultants are requested to send

1. Up to date CVs of their proposed team members
2. A detailed budget including all costs related to the assignment
3. A brief concept note (max. 5 pages) outlining the approach and methodology, as well as a draft work plan/ timetable for the assignment

via e-mail to kabul@eda.admin.ch with clearly marked indication “Consultancy for the External Review of Balanced Education (BALEDU) project” written in the subject. Only complete submissions will be taken into consideration and phone calls will not be answered.

The deadline for the submissions is until **18th of July 2019 5 PM (local time)**.