

Terms of Reference (ToR)

GRM CONSULTANT FOR MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION LEBANON

Short Terms Technical Assistance

Working with	MEHE Team and World Bank Team
Reporting to	MEHE Director General, Mr. Imad Al Achkar and World Bank Team
Approved by	MEHE Director General, Mr. Imad Al Achkar
Funded by	S2R2 Program
Assignment duration	34 working days
Start Date	TBD

Background & Rationales

With the support of the World Bank, the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) is seeking to strengthen its Grievance Redressal Mechanism (GRM) system, a key priority area identified under the Support to Reaching All Children with Education (S2R2) Program. The unified MEHE GRM aims to create trust between government and citizens/beneficiaries and enhance operational effectiveness by generating public awareness about program activities; providing staff with practical suggestions/feedback that allows them to be more transparent, accountable, and responsive to beneficiaries; deterring fraud and corruption; increasing involvement of stakeholders in program activities; and resolving problems before they escalate towards more serious and/or widespread issues.

Program Benefits of a Unified Grievance Redress Mechanism

Benefits to the Program	Benefits to Program Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Provides information about program implementationb) Provides an avenue to comply with MEHE's policies and regulations.c) Provides a forum for resolving grievances and disputes at all communication levels while applying the principles of confidentiality and anonymity as requestedd) Resolves disputes relatively quickly before they escalate to an unmanageable levele) Facilitates effective communication between the program and affected persons and ensures transparencyf) Helps win the trust and confidence of community members in the program and creates productive relationships between the partiesg) Ensures equitable and fair distribution of benefits, costs, and risksh) Mitigates or prevents adverse impacts of the program on communities and produces appropriate corrective or preventive action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Provides a cost-effective method to report grievances and complaintsb) Establishes a forum and a structure to report grievances with dignity, and access to a fair hearing and remedyc) Provides access to negotiate and influence decisions and policies of the program that might adversely affect themd) Facilitates access to information.e) Helps to build trust

i) Helps avoid potential program delays and cost increases, and improves quality of work	
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Scope

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) currently receives a significant number of complaints submitted by parents of school students, teachers, school directors, students, or external parties from all entities and directorates including but not limited to Primary, Secondary, Second Shift and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). The current GRM is not unified across the multiple departments at the MEHE with numerous uptake channels which are diversified and include but are not limited to Diwan, Director General's office, Ministry Hotline, complaint, and suggestion form on the MEHE website, and the Regional Education Offices (REOs) which might challenge the complainants to have clear visibility on which channel to submit their complaints. In other words, the current practice related to GRMs lacks a unified grievance handling policy and operating procedures. The need for this system has emerged considering the importance of ensuring that grievances are documented, tracked, reported, sorted, and addressed within a set time frame.

Objectives

This consultancy aims at scoping and assessing the existing systems across all directorates at the MEHE and, developing the required operational and technical documentation, which will be used to procure a suitable automated unified system that is compatible with the MEHE type of operations and processes.

- Assess the current GRM operation across the various departments at the MEHE.
- Support MEHE in establishing an accessible, transparent, efficient, and harmonized GRM for all citizens and affected persons under the S2R2 program.
- Provide clarity, predictability, and uniformity on how grievances, complaints, and concerns will be received, assessed, sorted, processed, resolved, and monitored under the program.
- Define the roles and responsibilities of the various parties involved in the consideration and resolution of grievances.
- Provide the needed technical specifications for a digitized GRM to be put in place.

Roles and Responsibilities of Consultancy

The consultant will be required to perform the following tasks according to the timeframe specified below:

Task 1: Assess the existing GRM system at MEHE. Main sub-tasks include:

1. Conducting interviews with directors and staff across all departments in charge of handling grievances, including Regional Educational Officers (REOs), to understand the existing procedures, documentation systems, and current practices.

2. Conducting field visits to schools to consult with samples of teachers, principals, and other program beneficiaries, to collect feedback on the current GRM performance, and recommendations for improvement.

Task 2. Prepare a GRM operational Manual. The manual should cover the following aspects:

1. The objectives of the GRM manual, which includes the main objectives MEHE aims to achieve from having an operational GRM manual. This includes having a functional GRM with a unified approach in handling grievances and strengthening accountability and responsiveness towards program beneficiaries and affected persons.
2. The seven main principles that will govern the GRM's processes and functions, where the manual should include a clear description of these principles. These principles are i) Transparency; ii) Fairness; iii) Accessibility; iv) Inclusiveness; v) Responsiveness; vi) Confidentiality; and vii) Objectivity and Independence.
3. Defining clear roles and responsibilities of the staff in the various departments/units/directorates involved in handling and resolution of grievances at MEHE.
4. Preparing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for handling grievances. These procedures are intended to serve as a guide for GRM staff of MEHE, who have been tasked with ensuring that the GRM is operational and functional. These procedures include; identification of uptake channels, development of a GRM log, classification of complaints such as those related to child protection, school violence, and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse /Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH), procedures for sorting complaints taking into consideration the priority, sensitivity and confidentiality of the case, timelines, and process for feedback to complainants, the quality of resolution and closure of complaints, escalation measures, and the option to appeal where requested.
5. As part of the GRM manual, preparing a suggested new grievance workflow map visualizing the input and output departments and stakeholders.

The grievance processing guidelines should cover the following steps of the GM value chain:

Step of the GRM value chain		Aspects to cover
1	Grievance uptake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relevance and effectiveness of existing feedback channels, as well as the need to potentially expand them by creating additional channels - Grievance channels that will be available and how they will be made accessible to all project-affected parties, including an anonymous channel for grievances of sensitive nature.
2	Grievance receipt, sorting and processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Criteria to be used to establish the eligibility of complaints and to prioritize specific types of grievances (for instance based on urgency and risk, or sensitivity of the grievance) - Categories of grievances likely to be received - Data points to be captured in the grievance log (e.g., nature of the complaint, channel through which it was submitted, geographical location of the complaint, gender, age...etc.)

3	Grievance acknowledgment and follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acknowledgment procedures of the complaint - Communication of next steps to the complainant (e.g., number of business days within which the complainant can expect to receive a response including a proposed resolution, etc.)
4	Grievance verification, investigation, and resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Procedure whereby complaints will be acted upon, and a resolution proposed to the complainant
5	Grievance monitoring and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Procedure to ensure that all GM entries are recorded in a consolidated GRM log - Indicators to be monitored continuously to assess the performance and effectiveness of the GM
6	Provision of feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appeals system for complainants that are dissatisfied with the response received and desire to contest it - Design and implementation of a complainant satisfaction survey to measure the degree of satisfaction of complainants with various aspects of the process

Task 3: Develop Technical Requirements and Specifications for a unified GRM system

Based on the findings and outcomes of tasks 1 and 2, develop the technical requirements and specifications of a unified GRM system considering:

1. The integration with existing applications and systems including but not limited to School Information Management System (SIMS).
2. The prerequisites of the MEHE network and system infrastructure to establish a digitized GRM.

Note: the consultant shall also provide costed options of how MEHEs GRM system can be modernized, implemented, managed, and maintained.

Task 4: Develop the Terms of References for a unified GRM system based on the outcomes of tasks 1, 2, and 3 for the selection of a vendor who will be responsible for developing and implementing the digitized GRM system.

Task 5: Submit a final report and present deliverables to MEHE administration and ensure proper handover to stakeholders who are directly involved in this program.

Note: This assignment is a specific assignment, which does not foresee the transfer of skills for civil servants; however, it includes providing a full handover of the provided work to DGE and the ICT Department to ensure the continuity of the project. Capacity building and specific user training initiatives will be provided by the vendor company which will be responsible for developing and implementing the digitized GRM system.

Deliverables and Timeline

Items	Deliverable	Number of Days Required
1	Assess the existing GRM system at MEHE.	8
2	Develop a GRM Manual.	12
3	Develop the proposed system's technical specifications and requirements with costed options.	5
4	Develop the Terms of References for the GRM unified and digitized software system.	4
5	Final Report and presentation with actions and timelines.	5

Required Qualifications

The consultant should demonstrate:

- At least a master's degree in Computer Science or any relevant field with advanced knowledge in applications and network technologies.
- Certification or equivalent experience in Business Analytics and/or GM handling and resolution, and preparation of GRM manuals.
- Certification in Social Development is a plus.
- At least five years of experience in the design, development, installation, and implementation of modern IT Customer Relationship Management with special focus on GRM systems.
- Similar professional experience in the development of customer relationship management systems for GRM terms of reference and SOPs for public institutions or large-scale organizations.
- Excellent communication, coordination, interpersonal, problem-solving, and negotiation skills
- Excellent data analysis and report-writing skills in English (Arabic is a plus)
- Fluency in English and Arabic is necessary, French is a plus

Administrative Requirements of Assignment

- The duration of this assignment is expected to be 34 working days. The tasks of the selected consultant will start from the day of the signing of the contract.
- The deadline for final deliverables should not exceed 4 months after signing of the contract.
- The consultant should be reporting to the DG throughout the assignment and to the ICT Director for all technical-related tasks.

Applicant Required Documents

The consultant shall submit his/her CV, cover letter, and a clear technical and financial proposal according to the above-mentioned deliverables and deadlines.