

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

**Country: Pakistan**

**Project:** Getting Results: Access and Delivery of Quality Education Services in Balochistan (GRADES-B)

**Project Number:** P507512

**Assignment Title:** Hiring of Consulting Firm for Development of Student Transport Strategy and Route Plan

**Reference No.** PK-PMU-SED GOB-545094-CS-CQS

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### Key Reference Documents

1. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa-Rural Accessibility Project – School Transport Component.
  - a. TORs: Detailed study on identifying beneficiaries and transport service<sup>1</sup>
  - b. KP-RAP Project Paper ()<sup>2</sup>
  - c. KP-RAP Project Information Document ()<sup>3</sup>
2. Punjab – School Transport Policy / Safety Circulars
  - a. “Regarding Transport Policy” – DPI (Secondary Education), School Education Department Punjab<sup>4</sup>
3. UNICEF – Child & Adolescent Road Safety Guidance<sup>5</sup>
4. Pakistan analytical reference – School Vans / Regulation<sup>6</sup>

### 1. Introduction

The Government of Balochistan (GoB), through the School Education Department (SED), is implementing the **Getting Results: Access and Delivery of Quality Education Services in Balochistan (GRADES-Balochistan)** Project with support from the World Bank (IDA). GRADES aims to increase enrollment and improve learning outcomes by addressing key barriers to access, particularly for girls and children from marginalized households.

One critical barrier is the **distance, cost, and safety of school travel**, especially in rural and sparsely populated areas where settlements are far from existing schools and transport options are limited or unsafe. To respond to this challenge, GRADES envisages a dedicated school transport intervention to provide **safe, reliable, and affordable journeys to school for girls**, linked to other project investments such as additional classrooms, community schools, and double-shift provision.

<sup>1</sup> Safe and Affordable School Journeys for Girls: <https://old.cwd.gkp.pk/images/pr-rap/TORs%20of%20Component-2%20%28KP-RAP%29.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099032625010532828/pdf/P177069-5e48486d-6cc7-44db-905a-9c91294fe593.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Component 2: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/895161654610033556/pdf/Pakistan-Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa-Rural-Accessibility-Project-KPRAP.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [https://download.ssapunjab.org/sub/instructions/2019/July/RegardingTransportPolicy05\\_07\\_2019.pdf](https://download.ssapunjab.org/sub/instructions/2019/July/RegardingTransportPolicy05_07_2019.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Technical Guidance, 2022:

[https://www.unicef.org/media/130721/file/UNICEF\\_Child\\_and\\_Adolescent\\_Road\\_Safety\\_Technical\\_Guidance\\_2022.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/media/130721/file/UNICEF_Child_and_Adolescent_Road_Safety_Technical_Guidance_2022.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://file.pide.org.pk/pdf/pideresearch/book-a-collection-of-theses-on-sustainable-public-transport.pdf>

These Terms of Reference set out the scope for hiring a specialized consulting firm to develop a Student Transport Strategy and a district level route plan package for a pilot in ten districts. The assignment will produce the operational design, costing scenarios, implementation tools, and capacity building support required for piloting, with clear pathways for scale up and sustainability.

The Firm will also provide detailed guidelines for the design and implementation of a transportation system that prioritizes the safety and convenience of girls, offer suggestions for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention over time, and highlight potential partnerships with local transportation providers and community organizations to enhance the success of the initiative.

## **2. Background and Rationale**

Balochistan faces persistent challenges in ensuring equitable access to schooling, particularly for girls and children living in remote, sparsely populated, and low-income areas.

Key barriers include:

- Long distances to the nearest government school, often requiring travel along unsafe or poorly maintained roads.
- Safety concerns, social norms, seasonal constraints, and transport costs that reduce enrolment and regular attendance for girls

Under GRADES-Balochistan, SED is investing in several access enhancing interventions such as additional classrooms, community-based schools, and double shift provision in selected locations. In several priority areas, however, distance and transport constraints remain binding. A well-designed student transport intervention can complement these investments by reducing the cost and risk of school journeys, improving attendance, and enabling previously out of schoolgirls to enroll.

The PMU and technical partners are undertaking analytical work to identify transport eligible schools and catchments and to support impact evaluation preparation, including geospatial analysis and field verification tools. This particular consultancy is intended to operationalize those analytical inputs into an implementable transport strategy and route plan package.

## **3. Objectives of the Assignment**

The objective of the consultancy is to develop a Student Transport Strategy and Route Plan for GRADES-Balochistan that enables safe, reliable, and affordable school journeys, with a focus on primary school girls.

Specifically, the firm will:

- Operationalize the list of transport eligible schools and catchments provided by the PMU/WB by verifying route feasibility and confirming practical pickup points and available transport services in the field.
- Develop transport service models and route typologies suited to Balochistan's context, covering the types of services available (for example Chingchi, rickshaw, vans, coasters, minibuses, and other locally feasible modes) and defining when each is appropriate from a safety and safeguarding perspective.
- Prepare a route plan package for the pilot districts, including route sheets, maps, and a shortlist of feasible local service providers.
- Develop an institutional and contracting framework that clearly assigns roles for SED, PMU, District Education Offices, Parent Teacher School Management Committees (PTSMCs), and transport providers, including monitoring and grievance handling.
- Develop costing and financing scenarios and a sustainability plan.
- Adapt and apply existing safeguards and safety frameworks (including relevant materials from KP-RAP, where applicable) to Balochistan, and produce practical compliance tools, training modules, and standard operating procedures for drivers, chaperones, and implementing partners.
- Prepare a Student Transport Manual (Urdu and English) and deliver training sessions for relevant officials and PTSMC members to enable implementation and supervision during the implementation.

#### **4. Scope of Work and Detailed Tasks**

The firm will work closely with SED, the GRADES PMU, District Education Offices, PTSMCs, the provincial and Transport Department, The PMU will provide the initial list of transport eligible schools, indicative catchments and clusters, and related analytical outputs. The firm's work is expected to focus on route feasibility verification, transport service design, operational and contracting arrangements, safeguards compliance, costing scenarios, and capacity building.

##### **Task 1. Inception, Desk Review, and Methodology**

The firm will:

- Conduct a rapid desk review of GRADES-Balochistan documents, relevant provincial regulations, and existing national and provincial experience on student transport and safe school journeys.

- Review analytical inputs including spatial analysis provided by PMU and technical partners<sup>7</sup>, including transport eligible school lists, catchments, preliminary cluster or settlement analysis, and any field verification instruments and results (for example output from Field assessment verification survey to shortlist schools for transport eligibility).
- Review existing safeguards and safety materials (including KP-RAP documentation, where applicable) and identify elements that can be directly adapted for GRADES-Balochistan to avoid duplication and reduce cost and time.
- Define the route planning approach and route typologies as an operational verification exercise, including mapping from population weighted settlement points within catchments to the identified school(s), and defining the minimum field checks required to confirm route existence and safety constraints.
- Prepare an Inception Report with a detailed methodology, survey tools, data requirements, field validation plan, district wise work plan, coordination arrangements, and a quality assurance plan. The inception report will include a clear distinction between data to be provided by PMU and data to be generated or validated by the firm.
- *Transport activities shall adhere to safety and protection standards, including child-safe transport protocols, gender-sensitive seating arrangements, and compliance with road safety regulations. Safeguard measures will be integrated into driver training, vehicle monitoring, and community awareness campaigns.*

## **Task 2. Rapid field validation and transport market assessment (Supply Side)**

The firm will undertake field work in each pilot district to validate route feasibility and assess the local transport market. The task is supposed to be a rapid, implementation-oriented assessment focused on operational feasibility.

The firm will:

- Conduct route assessment for the pre-identified clusters and school catchments<sup>8</sup>, including confirmation of road conditions, seasonal access constraints, security considerations, and safe pickup and drop off points.
- Conduct key informant interviews and focused group discussions with school heads, PTSMC members, district education staff, local community representatives (including mothers and female guardians), and transport operators to understand operational constraints and safety perceptions.
- Map the availability, typical tariffs, and operating practices of local transport services (for example Chingchi, rickshaw, vans, coasters, buses), and identify provider capacity and willingness to operate under a contractual school transport arrangement.

<sup>7</sup> SurveyAuto, World Bank Data and Evidence Lab. The analytical input includes a dashboard, settlement analysis and list of catchment areas and clusters around schools shortlisted for transport service.

<sup>8</sup> The pre-identified clusters and school catchment list will be provided by PMU and WB team

- The outcome should provide metrics on school accessibility (based on travel time, distance, and transportation network conditions) and assess the potential role of a transportation service for improving schooling access for primary aged children given the current government capacity.
- Document findings in a district wise field validation note, including issues log and recommended adjustments to routes, pickup points, potential transport services; and opportunities to leverage current assets (including departmental buses).
- The firm shall not undertake new settlement analyses. Instead, it shall validate and verify settlement data already produced by PMU
- focusing solely on confirming accuracy and addressing critical gaps necessary for operational decision-making. However, the firm may propose new settlements that were missed during the analytical exercise and that could be served through transport services.
- The resulting output would be a shortlist of schools (from the initial longlist provided by PMU) and nearby catchments or settlements that will be selected for transport intervention.

### **Task 3. Route feasibility verification and route plan package**

Building on Task 2, the firm will prepare implementable route plans for each pilot district.

The firm will:

- Confirm service zones and school clusters using PMU provided inputs, and validate them through field findings. The firm may recommend minor refinements for feasibility.
- For each cluster, prepare route sheets that specify origin settlement points, usual pickup stops, destination school, distance and indicative travel time, road type and seasonal risk, and recommended operational constraints (speed limits, maximum occupancy, convoy requirements where relevant).
- Define route typologies (for example paved all weather, unpaved all weather, unpaved seasonal, mountainous, river crossing) and the corresponding vehicle requirements, safety measures, and contingency plans.
- Prepare maps for each route and district, in both PDF and editable GIS format, with a consistent legend and metadata.
- The Firm shall identify transport-related risks and corresponding mitigation strategies specific to Balochistan. These risks include poor and unpaved road infrastructure in rural districts, seasonal flooding and landslides that disrupt access, fuel shortages and price volatility, and security concerns along inter-district routes. This analysis shall be grounded in the specific context of each target area

### **Task 4. Service design and operational framework**

The firm will define service models appropriate for the pilot, taking into account safety requirements for girls, local market feasibility, and the need for a practical implementation approach.

The firm will:

- Define transport service model options for each cluster, such as contracted dedicated vehicles, optimized use of any existing departmental vehicles where available, or other locally feasible arrangements. Use of regular commercial routes should only be proposed if safety and safeguarding requirements can be met, including dedicated seats, supervised boarding, and chaperone arrangements.
- Define minimum service standards for punctuality, vehicle condition, driver and chaperone conduct, and reporting, with clear parameters for acceptable nonperformance and remedial actions.
- Define operational procedures for daily attendance, pickup and drop off supervision, incident reporting, and escalation pathways.
- Propose a practical approach to estimating take-up, drawing on EMIS enrollment, PTSMC input, and local knowledge. The firm should present intervention take-up estimates as ranges where uncertainty exists, and explicitly account for expected uptake by out of school girls as part of the pilot objectives.
- The Firm will also need to design and implement a communication plan to spread awareness of the program and to communicate its possible benefits. Aspects such as transport safety, and the benefits of school attendance should be covered in the campaign. This will also entail developing a plan of trainings to sensitize selected transport providers on gender and gender-based violence and preparing relevant material/training modules on this topic.

#### **Task 5. Costing, financing scenarios, and sustainability plan**

The firm will develop a costing framework and financing scenarios for the pilot and potential scale up.

The firm will:

- Develop route level operating cost estimates, including fuel, driver and chaperone remuneration, maintenance, administration, and monitoring costs.
- Provide unit costs such as cost per vehicle day, cost per route month, and indicative cost per student seat month under different utilization rates.
- Develop financing scenarios such as full subsidy during pilot, partial copayment options, payments to providers, and potential post project financing pathways through GoB budgets or local contributions, clearly stating assumptions and data limitations.
- Prepare a Sustainability Plan that sets out institutional and fiscal responsibilities beyond the project period, including options for more efficient utilization of any existing government transport assets and long-term contracting models.

#### **Task 6. Health, Safety, Safeguarding, and Grievance Package**

The firm will prepare a practical safety and safeguarding package that can be implemented at district and school levels. Where relevant, the firm will adapt existing KP-RAP materials and focus on compliance tools and capacity building.

The Consulting Firm shall:

- Define vehicle safety standards and inspection checklists (licensing, fitness certification, seating capacity, maintenance schedules, emergency equipment).
- Recruit, vet, and train drivers and chaperones, with codes of conduct, refresher training, and emphasis on female chaperones for girls' routes.
- Ensure gender-sensitive seating, safe pickup/drop-off supervision, and contingency measures for seasonal and security risks.
- Prepare an operational risk register covering road safety, climate disruptions, financial and social risks, with mitigation procedures.
- Establish a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) with confidential, survivor-centered procedures for SEA/SH and GBV cases, clear timelines, escalation responsibilities, sanctions, and accessible reporting channels in Urdu and local languages.

### **Task 7. Institutional, contracting, monitoring, capacity building and exit strategy**

The firm will define the governance and implementation framework for piloting.

The firm will:

- Define roles and responsibilities across SED, PMU, District Education Offices, PTSMCs, and providers, including who selects beneficiaries within the PMU provided eligibility framework, who supervises daily operations, and who approves payments.
- Develop contracting templates and procurement guidance for engaging transport providers, with clear reporting obligations, payment rules, penalties, and termination clauses. The framework should include provisions for safety compliance and safeguarding.
- Define a monitoring system that specifies minimum data fields, reporting frequency, and responsible parties at school, district, and PMU levels. The firm should provide simple, implementable templates and tools that can later be integrated into EMIS or other MIS upgrades being pursued by SED.
- Provide recommendations for capacity building and institutional strengthening to ensure effective implementation and sustainability.
- Develop a communication and community engagement plan for pilot districts, including community sensitization on girls' safe travel, expectations from parents, and mechanisms for feedback.
- Prepare a Pilot Implementation Plan that includes the critical path for procurement and contracting, training and rollout sequencing, supervision arrangements, and practical readiness checklists for districts and schools.
- Deliver capacity building sessions based on the Student Transport Manual for district officials and PTSMC members. Training materials must be provided in both English and Urdu and should include practical exercises on contracting, monitoring, and safeguards compliance.

- A Sustainability Framework shall be developed to ensure the long-term viability of transport operations beyond donor support. Furthermore, an Exit Strategy shall be prepared to guarantee continuity of transport services after project completion

## **5. Duration**

The assignment is expected to be completed within six (06) months from contract signing.

## **6. Client Inputs and Counterpart Arrangements**

SED and the GRADES PMU will, to the extent feasible, provide the following inputs to support timely delivery:

- Validation of transport eligible school list and associated catchment or cluster information for the pilot districts, including any preliminary settlement points and route assumptions.
- Access to relevant administrative datasets (for example EMIS) and any geospatial layers already produced for impact evaluation preparation or other project planning.
- Field verification instruments and results, where available, including school functionality and basic accessibility verification.
- Relevant policy and safeguards documents, including KP-RAP materials and any applicable provincial regulations or circulars.
- Facilitation letters for district visits and coordination with District Education Offices and PTSMCs.
- Arrangements for review meetings and timely feedback on draft deliverables.
- The firm is expected to plan for work in all pilot districts provided by PMU.

## **7. Reporting and Coordination**

The firm will work under the direct supervision of the Project Director, GRADES and STEP Balochistan, and in close coordination with the designated Specialist-PMU BESP. The firm will participate in regular technical review meetings with SED, and PMU,

Reporting requirements include:

- Weekly meetings with the PMU BESP teams to share progress.
- A brief biweekly progress note covering activities completed, issues requiring decisions, and next biweekly work plan.

- Submission of all deliverables in editable formats (Word, Excel, GIS files) and in print ready PDF formats, with clear documentation of data sources, assumptions, and validation steps.

## 8. Deliverables, Timeline, and Payment Schedule

Deliverables will be reviewed by SED and PMU team. The indicative timeline below assumes a six-month duration.

S. No.	Deliverable	Key contents	Timeline
1	Inception Report and Work Plan	Refined methodology; data and inputs plan; field validation plan; route typology definition; safeguards adaptation approach; district wise schedule; QA plan.	End of Month 1
2	Field Validation and Transport Market Assessment Exercise	Field Survey Tool; Final list of schools and settlements selected for transport services; District wise validation notes; route findings; transport provider mapping; issues log and adjustments to preliminary clusters and pickup points.	End of Month 2
3	Draft Route Plan Package (Pilot Districts)	Route sheets and maps for each cluster; route typologies and vehicle requirements; indicative schedules; transport provider shortlists; draft operational procedures and Transport Risk and mitigation record.	End of Month 3
4	Service Design and Operational Framework	Service model options; minimum service standards; operational procedures for attendance, supervision, and incident reporting; communication and awareness plan; gender/GBV sensitization training modules; take-up estimation framework.	Mid of Month 4
5	Draft Student Transport Strategy, Sustainability Plan, and Safeguards Package, GRM and	Draft Strategy; service model framework; institutional and contracting arrangements; costing and financing scenarios; Sustainability Plan; safety and safeguarding compliance tools; GRM and risk register, Exit strategy.	End of Month 4

	Risk Register and Exit strategy		
6	Student Transport Manual (Urdu and English) and Training Package	Manual with SOPs, templates, checklists, and reporting tools; training agenda and materials; delivery of training sessions; training report.	End of Month 5
7	Final Consolidated Package and Data Handover	Final Strategy and Manual; final route plan package; final contracting templates; final costing scenarios; complete handover of datasets and GIS layers used or produced; implementation readiness checklist and pilot rollout plan.	End of Month 6

## 9. Key Experts: Qualifications and Responsibilities

### 9.1 Team Leader and Transport Strategy Specialist

#### Minimum qualifications:

- Master’s degree or higher in Transport Planning, Civil Engineering, Urban or Regional Planning, Public Policy, Economics, or related field.
- At least ten (10) years of relevant experience, including leading multi-disciplinary assignments.

#### Key responsibilities:

- Overall technical leadership and quality assurance across all deliverables.
- Lead strategic design choices on service models, governance, sustainability, and scale up.
- Lead high level consultations with SED, Transport Department, Finance and Planning departments, and the World Bank team.
- Oversee integration of field validation findings into route plans and operational frameworks.

### 9.2 Route Planning and GIS Specialist

#### Minimum qualifications:

- Master’s degree in Transport Engineering or Planning, GIS, Geomatics, Geography, or related field.
- At least eight (8) years of experience in route planning and GIS based network analysis, including field validation.

#### Key responsibilities:

- Translate PMU provided cluster inputs into route maps and route sheets and coordinate field verification of route feasibility.
- Prepare district and route maps in required formats and maintain metadata and version control for route layers.
- Develop route typologies and corresponding vehicle and safety requirements.

### 9.3 Education Access, Gender, and Social Inclusion Specialist

#### Minimum qualifications:

- Master's degree in Education Planning, Social Sciences, Gender Studies, or related field.
- At least eight (8) years of experience in girls' education, barriers to access, and community engagement.

#### Key responsibilities:

- Ensure route plans and service models respond to girls' safety and mobility constraints and support the inclusion of out of school girls.
- Lead community consultations with women and girls and inform the communication and engagement plan.
- Contribute to safeguarding measures and GRM design from a child protection and inclusion lens.

### 9.4 Costing and Sustainability Specialist

#### Minimum qualifications:

- Graduate degree in Economics, Finance, Public Policy, Transport Economics, or related field.
- At least seven (7) years of experience in costing, unit cost modelling, and financing analysis for public service delivery.

#### Key responsibilities:

- Develop route level cost estimates and financing scenario analysis.
- Prepare the Sustainability Plan and provide fiscal implications for pilot and scale up options.
- Support definition of performance linked payment mechanisms and value for money considerations.

### 9.5 Safeguards and Risk Management Specialist

#### Minimum qualifications:

- Graduate degree in Social Development, Public Health, Law, Transport Safety, or related field.
- At least seven (7) years of experience in safeguards, SEA and SH risk management, child protection, and grievance systems.

#### Key responsibilities:

- Develop the safety and safeguarding compliance package, including driver and chaperone vetting and training modules.
- Develop the risk register and mitigation measures and define incident reporting and response procedures.
- Ensure alignment with World Bank environmental and social requirements and applicable GoB regulations.

## 9.6 Monitoring and Reporting Specialist

### Minimum qualifications:

- Graduate degree in Monitoring and Evaluation, Information Systems, Statistics, or related field.
- At least seven (7) years of experience developing monitoring tools and reporting systems for service delivery programmes.

### Key responsibilities:

- Define minimum monitoring indicators and reporting templates for routes, ridership, safety incidents, and provider performance.
- Develop simple tools that can be implemented immediately and later integrated into EMIS or other MIS upgrades.
- Support training on monitoring and reporting procedures for districts and PTSMCs.

## 10. Staffing Plan

Bidders may propose staffing structures that meet the objectives of the assignment. The table below provides an indicative level of effort.

Position	No. of persons	Indicative person-months	Role summary
Team Leader and Transport Strategy Specialist	1	6	Overall leadership, stakeholder engagement, strategy and QA.
Route Planning and GIS Specialist	1	3	Route sheets, maps, route typologies, field verification support.
Education Access, Gender, and Social Inclusion Specialist	1	3	Girls' safety and inclusion, consultations, communications inputs.
Costing and Sustainability Specialist	1	2	Route costing, financing scenarios, Sustainability Plan.
Safeguards and Risk Management Specialist	1	2	Safety and safeguarding package, GRM, risk register, training modules.

Monitoring and Reporting Specialist	1	2	Monitoring templates and tools, reporting system, training support.
Field Coordinator	1	6	Coordinates district visits, logistics, documentation, and schedules.
District Field Facilitators	Up to 5	2 each	Support district consultations, route mapping, and documentation.
Data and GIS Assistant	1	3	Data cleaning support, map production, file management.
Admin and Finance Support	1	6	Procurement support, travel claims, workshop logistics.

Bidders are expected to propose a realistic travel and fieldwork plan. Workshops and validation meetings should, where feasible, be hosted in government offices to support sustainability and reduce costs.

## 11. Required Firm Qualifications

The consulting firm should demonstrate:

- At least ten (10) years of experience in transport planning, rural mobility, education access, or related service delivery assignments.
- Demonstrated experience in designing or operationalizing school transport or safe mobility interventions, preferably in Pakistan or comparable contexts.
- Experience in designing contract frameworks, performance-based service standards, and monitoring systems for transport or social sector services.
- Availability of necessary personnel to carry out the services and commitment to maintaining adequate staffing to complete the work within the stipulated time.
- Experience in safety and safeguarding frameworks for child focused services, including road safety, SEA and SH prevention, and child protection measures.

## 12. Procurement Method

Selection will be made in accordance with the Consultant Qualification based Selection (CQS) method set out in the World Bank’s Procurement Regulations for Investment Project Financing Goods, Works, Non-Consulting and Consulting Services” September, 2023.