



MIDTERM EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

PROJECT TO BE EVALUATED

Project Name	GENTLE - GENDER-responsive Teaching and Learning in the Early years
Project Location	Vietnam, Quang Nam and Quang Ngai province
Project Implementation	01 June 2018 – 31 May 2021
Project Donor	European Union and Belgian Government
Project Budget	535,320 EURO
Evaluation Type	Mid-term Evaluation
Evaluation timeframe	March – Early May 2020
Deadline to submit proposals	01 March 2020, 8pm (Vietnam)

TENDERING ORGANIZATION

1. This Call for Proposals is issued by *VVOB – education for development* duly represented by **Wouter Boesman**, VVOB Programme Manager in Vietnam.
2. The Call shall be followed up by **Ms. Dao Phuong Thuy**, GENTLE project coordinator, VVOB Vietnam
3. The evaluation process will be monitored by an Evaluation Steering Group composed of 4 VVOB staff and 1 CGFED staff

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1. BACKGROUND

About VVOB

VVOB – education for development is an organisation based in Belgium with more than 35 years of experience in sustainably improving the quality of education systems. VVOB has received support for this from multiple leading funding partners, adding up to a total annual budget of over 13 million euros spread over 10 country programs. VVOB reinforces the capacity of ministries of Education and their institutions to implement their education policies as effectively as possible. This guarantees the sustainability of results. The geographical, thematic and operational choices VVOB makes in each programme are informed by relevant research and the policy priorities of VVOB's partner countries and formulated in partnership with their governments.

From 2017 to 2021, VVOB Vietnam is working on an early education programme BaMi (Mitigating Barriers to Learning) financed by Belgium in close cooperation with the Departments of Education and Training (DOETs) of Quang Nam, Quang Ngai and Kon Tum provinces in Central Vietnam. This programme aims at improving the quality of teaching and learning of all 3-to-5-year-old children in preschools. More specifically, it focuses on enhancing the knowledge and skills of the DOETs to strengthen the capacities of preschool teachers and school leaders to mitigate children's barriers to learning and participation (eg: barriers related to gender, environment, culture, language,) for better participation and well-being. VVOB supports targeted disadvantaged and ethnically diverse districts to enhance their needs-based and school-based in-service teacher professional development towards process oriented child monitoring and reflective learning communities in preschools. The GENTLE project complements the barriers-to-learning approach that is the backbone of the BaMi program.

About Gender-responsive teaching and learning in the early years (GENTLE)

Challenge:

Young children in Vietnam are exposed to gender roles and expectations. This early gender socialisation is reinforced in preschool environments (e.g. through gender-specific toys and gender-based activities). Particularly in the central provinces of Vietnam, inequalities due to early gender socialisation are among the most persisting equity issues, affecting both girls and boys.

Children start forming their gender identities at the age of 4. Addressing children's early years' experiences through gender-responsive play-based learning is crucial to impact their long term cognitive and social-emotional development, and to work on the prevention and elimination of gender-inequality, a precursor to gender-based violence.

The Vietnamese government, preschool teachers and leaders show commitment to promote gender-responsive play-based learning but need support to achieve their goals. Parents and communities are not always aware of gender bias and its impact on children or are hesitant to change existing gender norms.

Therefore, the **Overall objective** of the action is defined as: 3-5-year-old girls and boys in central Vietnam experience gender-responsive play-based learning in preschool and at home, contributing to the development of positive identities, relationships and self-esteem, which enable them to have healthy and joyful lives free from gender-based violence.

The **Specific Objective** is: Teachers, school leaders, parents and guardians in 15 mountainous districts in central Vietnam implement gender-responsive play-based learning in preschool and at home, contributing to the development of positive identities, relationships and self-esteem in 3-5-year-old children.

To reach these objectives, following **outputs** have been defined:

1. A toolkit for teachers and school leaders on gender-responsive play-based learning is developed, tested and in use in all 156 preschools in 15 districts of two provinces in central Vietnam
2. 15 preschools in 15 districts of two provinces in Central Vietnam have been transformed into model schools for gender-responsive play-based learning
3. DOET and BOET Early Childhood Education staff of the 2 provinces/15 districts provide an enabling environment, support and provide in-service professional development for gender-responsive play-based learning, allowing for the implementation in all 156 preschools in the 15 districts.
4. A parent-school sensitisation model on gender-responsive play-based learning has been developed and implemented involving 31,051 parents/guardians (with special focus on fathers) in 15 districts in 2 provinces in central Vietnam

Partners in the action are:

- Ministry of Education and Training (MOET): national Department of Teachers and Educational Administrators
- Provincial Departments of Education and Training (DOET) of Quang Nam and Quang Ngai
- 15 Bureaus of Education and Training (BOET, district-level) in Quang Nam and Quang Ngai
- Research Center for Gender, Family and Environment in Development (CGFED)

Approach:

The *GENTLE* project aims to transforms preschools in 15 districts in central Vietnam into environments of gender-responsive play-based learning, involving parents (and fathers in particular) to the fullest in the process.

The project centres on developing the capacity of preschool teachers and school leaders to challenge social and gender norms, create new rules, and support children in adopting new, more equitable attitudes and behaviours. They are provided with tools to effectively implement gender-responsive play-based learning at school and to advocate for this approach at home too with the parents of their young learners.

To reach its goals, VVOB Vietnam develops the capacity of its education partners. VVOB uses capacity development trajectories that give partners maximal responsibility in the execution and management of their own change processes. This is done through technical assistance provided by

the VVOB Vietnam team, which includes both local and international educational and change management experts.

2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE MID-TERM EVALUATION

This midterm evaluation (MTE) is being commissioned to provide an independent assessment of the project's progress to date, and to evaluate its performance against the objective mentioned above. The results from the evaluation are expected to offer key insights and lessons into successes or challenges that the project has faced, with a view to help inform the implementation of the latter half of the project.

Objectives of the Mid-Term Evaluation

- To review progress towards the achievement of project outputs and in particular outputs 1 and 2, specific objectives and overall objective, based on the logical framework of the project
- To determine the extent to which the project has met the **evaluation criteria** set forward by the donors in supporting the delivery and achievement of planned results: Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact and Sustainability
- Identify key insights, lessons and good practices
- To identify challenges or gaps and provide recommendations in relation to achievement of project objectives and outputs and to suggest what adjustments if any, would need to be made in the strategy and structure of the project for maximum impact at the level of establishing gender-responsive school environments at the preschool level, as well as at the level of teacher training
- To support stakeholders to reflect on project progress and its future direction
- To determine the effectiveness of the partnerships within the project.

3. METHODOLOGY

The consultant is expected to use a combination of **desk review** (including relevant policies, project documents, project interim reports and others), school and classroom **observations, in-depth interviews** with co-applicants (CGFED), key partners (e.g., Provincial DOETs, BOETs), sample of direct beneficiaries (preschool leading teachers and leaders) and **focus group discussions** with direct beneficiaries of the participating schools.

3.1 KEY LEARNING QUESTIONS

The evaluation is expected to address several key learning questions, including the following:

Relevance

The extent to which the project responds to real needs/challenges and is suited to the priorities and policies of the target groups and partners – taking into account that the context is susceptible to change over time.

Guiding questions:

- To what extent are the objectives of the GENTLE project aligned with national (educational) policies, strategies and action plans?
- To what extent is the GENTLE project addressing the gender-related needs of preschools in Quang Nam and Quang Ngai provinces?

Effectiveness

The extent to which the intended outputs are being achieved in relation to indicators set in the Logical Framework; and general progress against the envisioned results of the project.

Guiding questions:

- To what extent has the project progressed to attaining its five outputs to support the establishment of 15 model schools (output 1 and 2)?
- To what extent have the partnerships in GENTLE been effective?
- What factors have influenced the achievements observed so far?
- To what extent is the current approach – focus on developing the capacity of preschool teachers and school leaders to challenge social and gender norms, create new rules, and support children in adopting new, more equitable attitudes and behaviours involving parents (and fathers in particular) of their young learners effective to support the establishment of gender-responsive school environments in Quang Nam and Quang Ngai provinces, Vietnam?

Efficiency

The extent to which funding, personnel, regulations, administration, time, other resources and procedures contributing to, or hindering, the achievements of results.

Guiding questions:

- To what extent can the project be considered efficient?
- Does this input-output/outcome ratio seem reasonable?
- Is progress on results timely?

Sustainability

The extent to which processes, outcomes and impacts are likely to continue after the withdrawal of VVOB support and assessment of whether the project design sets up adequate incentives for beneficiaries to own the project and work towards achievement of the objectives.

Guiding questions:

- Are the benefits of the project activities likely to persist in the long-term?
- What is the likelihood that the project approach and activities will be sustained and expanded after the project has ended?
- What are recommendations for the implementation in the remainder of the project to strengthen the sustainability of the action?
- What factors are likely to be essential for replication and upscaling of 15 model schools in the GENTLE project?

Impact

The extent to which the project impact or is expected to impact the attitudes, skills and practices of direct beneficiaries (preschool leading teachers and leaders) and indirect beneficiaries (parents/caregivers), and how does it contribute to the stated objectives. Rather than an assessment of the impact, the MTE is expected to report on the possible direction and other early indications of the impact of the project.

Guiding questions:

- What has been the preliminary impact of the project – positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended – on the attitudes, skills and practices of teachers and school leaders in the 15 model schools?
- To what extent does the approach piloted in the model schools impact the attitudes, skills and practices of teachers and school leaders in these schools?
- What are recommendations for the implementation of outputs 3 and 4 in the remainder of the project based on the evaluation of the approach used in the 15 model schools in Output 2?
- Are there any different impacts in the 2 different provinces / different schools and what could this be attributed to?

3.2. THE PROCESS OF THE MID-TERM EVALUATION

Taking the purpose and learning questions of this MTE into account, the consultant is invited to elaborate upon his/her choice of methodology and tools:

- Detailed and focused desk review, including review of key project documentation
- Development of evaluation tools
- Engagement and in-depth interviews with key staff/co-applicant/partners involved in the implementation of key project activities, including:
 1. VVOB project staff
 2. Key project staff of co-applicant (CGFED)
 3. Key partners, including DOETs and BOETs of Quang Nam and Quang Ngai provinces
 4. A sample of leading teachers, school leaders and parents/caregivers
 5. Focus group discussions with a sample of leading teachers, school leaders and parents
- Observations in schools and classrooms
- Analysis of data collected during MTE process
- Consolidate, review and finalize findings
- Meeting with GENTLE project staff to review the findings
- Integrating in meetings and workshop with stakeholders to formulate recommendations
- Integration of workshop inputs into the Mid-Term Evaluation report, including an executive summary

VVOB Vietnam and the GENTLE team will:

- Coordinate and support the consultant during the desk review, fieldwork, data analysis and organisation of workshops
- Provide relevant documents (project document, monitoring reports, project reports) to the consultant
- Provide feedback on the MTE report

3.3 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTATION

Relevant documents will be made available to the evaluator to complete the evaluation, including but not limited to:

- Project Documents
- Project Log frame and key indicators
- Interim Narrative Report
- Research reports (e.g. baseline study in 10 random preschools in Quang Nam and Quang Ngai on GRPBL)

3.4 PROPOSED REPORT STRUCTURE:

- Executive summary
- Evaluation objectives and methodology
- Findings for each criterion (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability)
 - Data analysis (e.g. perceptions of direct and indirect beneficiaries)
 - Strengths and weaknesses
 - Key insights, lessons and good practices
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
- Annexes (Terms of Reference, list of persons or groups consulted, documents reviewed, etc.)

4. DELIVERABLES

The following outputs are envisaged:

- Inception report with relevant findings from the desk review, a programme with timeframes and activities guiding the fieldwork and detailed evaluation questions and tools
- Preliminary report on the findings and conclusions of the fieldwork, including preliminary recommendations
- Restitution and learning workshop for stakeholders
- Draft MTE Report
- Final MTE Report

All written reports must be submitted in English. The restitution and Learning workshop for stakeholders has to be delivered in Vietnamese (or with Vietnamese translation).

5. RESPONSIBILITIES AND TIMEFRAMES

The consultancy will take place between **3rd Mar. to 8th May, 2020**:

- 06-10th March: Desk review
- 11-20th March: Fieldwork
- 30th March: Preliminary report due + restitution workshop with GENTLE project staff and other stakeholders
- 3rd week of April: Draft final report
- 1st week of May: Final report due

A preliminary timeframe looks as follows:

Dates	Activity
04-05 th March 2020	Signing of contract Briefing between VVOB and consultant(s) Handing over of project documents
06-10 th March 2020	Desk review

	Inception report containing programme with timeframes and activities for the fieldwork and evaluation tools Feedback on proposed programme and evaluation tools from VVOB Finalising field-programme and evaluation tools
Weeks 10-20 Mar. 2020	Interviews with VVOB Project staff and key staff from co-applicant Fieldwork: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In-depth interviews• Focus group discussions Preliminary data analysis Preliminary report due
30 th March 2020	Data analysis Triangulation of findings with previous studies Preliminary report due + Restitution workshop with GENTLE project staff and other key stakeholders
1 st week of April 2020	Report writing
13 April 2020	Submission of draft report by consultant
20 April 2020	Feedback by VVOB and CGFED on draft report
27 April 2020	Report writing with possibility to request additional feedback
08 May 2020	Submission of final report by consultant(s)

An alternative timeframe can be provided by the consultant(s) in the proposal.

Time bound activities, outputs and outcomes will be agreed, developed and reported on during the briefing meeting and subsequent progress meetings with the service provider and VVOB. Routine progress will be monitored through updates during teleconferences, emails and meetings on specific activities.

6. MAXIMUM BUDGET

6,000 Euro (six thousand Euro) inclusive of all costs, taxes or insurances. VVOB will deduct 10% Personal Income Tax (for residents, foreigners who have stayed in Vietnam for 183 days and above in a tax year) or 20% PIT (for non-residents, foreigners who have stayed in Vietnam for less than 183 days in a tax year) on the payment and submit to the Tax Department.

The only costs that will be covered by VVOB other than the consultancy fee are the costs incurred for the organisation of the Restitution workshop. This include transport of members, meals, meeting venues and materials.

7. EXPECTATIONS REGARDING PROPOSALS

VVOB is inviting to come up with a proposal containing at least:

- A detailed outline of the envisaged activities and outcomes, including an introduction of the evaluation tools which will be used
- A detailed financial proposal covering all costs, including an estimation of the time to be invested in working hours (a daily rate and an estimated number of days for each part of the assignment)
- An updated CV of the **local** consultant(s)/ service provider (s) is (are) to be attached to the proposal
- If the consultant includes in her/his proposal one or more assistants in the interventions, then the CVs of the latter should be included in the proposal as well
- References and other information supporting the required expertise listed in the qualitative requirements

Ethical aspects of the consultancy, such as data collection from human subjects and their consent, should be covered in the technical proposal.

The proposal and the evaluation reports have to be submitted in English to VVOB Vietnam.

8. AWARDING PROCEDURE

This Call will be awarded on the basis of a negotiation procedure with restricted notification.

The procedure will be conducted in English.

8.1 ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

VVOB invites **local** consultant(s)/service provider(s) with the following expertise to submit:

- Company registration documents (**this can be discussed if the service provider is rendering services in their individual capacity)
- Valid tax clearance certificate
- Banking details confirmed by the bank
- VAT certificate (if registered for VAT)

8.2 QUALITATIVE REQUIREMENTS

VVOB invites service provider(s)/consultant(s) with the following expertise to submit a proposal:

- Proven knowledge and understanding of gender and/or capacity development issues within the Vietnamese education sector
- Proven knowledge and understanding of gender-related issues within the Vietnamese context
- At least 10 years of experience with conducting research, monitoring and/or evaluation in the education sector
- At least 5 years of experience with the evaluation of donor driven projects – both midterm and final evaluations
- Strong analytical and reporting skills
- Experience with participatory assessment processes

- Knowledge of Vietnamese is an asset – if the consultant is not a Vietnamese speaker, the budget should include high-quality translation service in all necessary phases of the review

The service provider(s)/consultant(s) should be highly reliable and organised, excellent in communication skills in English and work in a results-oriented way.

8.3 AWARD CRITERIA & SCORING

Proposals will be evaluated by GENTLE project coordinator (VVOB Vietnam), the Monitoring and Evaluation advisor (VVOB Vietnam) and one Education Advisor/Specialist from Head Office (VVOB Belgium).

Evaluation will be done in 3 phases:

1. Review of the administrative requirements. Only providers/consultants that fulfil these requirements will proceed to the second phase.
2. Review of qualitative requirements (based on evidence for qualitative requirements. Only providers/consultants that fulfil the minimum qualitative requirements will proceed to the third phase.
3. Scoring and ranking of proposals on the basis of the following criteria:

3.1. Technical Proposal: (80%)

- Technical feasibility of the proposal: soundness and relevance of the tools and strategies proposed (**30%**)
- Expertise and skills of the consultant(s)/service provider(s), and the ability to complete the MTE within proposed timeframe (**30%**)
- Quality of the proposal (**20%**)

Only proposals that have at least 56% on the technical proposal are considered for the evaluation of the financial proposal.

3.2. Financial Proposal (20%):

- Price ($20 \times (\text{price lowest proposal} / \text{price proposal})$)

If deemed necessary, VVOB may decide to further negotiate the proposal with one or more consultant(s)/service provider(s). These negotiations may result in an adapted proposal by the consultant(s)/service provider(s) and subsequent modifications in evaluation and ranking of the proposals. VVOB reserves the right to extend the deadline of the call or to re-advertise the call in case no suitable proposal was received.

8.4 DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSALS

Proposals are sent to the following e-mail address: thuy.dp@vvob.org

The closing date for proposals is **1st Mar, 2020 8:00 PM (Vietnam time)**.

The following timeline will be followed in awarding the procedure:

Deadline submissions	Mar. 1, 2020 8:00 PM (Vietnam time).
Opening submissions	Mar. 2, 2020
Negotiation procedure	Mar. 3–4, 2020
Final decision and awarding	Mar. 5, 2020

9. OTHER PROVISIONS

9.1 APPLICABLE LEGAL PROVISIONS

The awarded contract may be terminated immediately and without term of notice or compensation by either party by means of a registered letter, in case of serious failure to comply with the contract by either party.

9.2 DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT

The agreement will be concluded for the period **5 Mar. – 8 May 2020**.

9.3 Languages used

All communication with VVOB Vietnam will be conducted in English.

All written reports and proposals must be submitted in English

Interaction with project beneficiaries must happen in Vietnamese (interviews, text review, restitution and learning workshop). Any cost related to translation in case the evaluator is not fluent in Vietnamese must be made part of the project proposal.

9.4 SUPERVISION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The assignment will be monitored by VVOB's Evaluation Steering Group composed of the Country Program Manager in Vietnam, the GENTLE project coordinator, the CGFED representative, the VVOB Vietnam Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor and a senior Education Advisor at the VVOB Head Office in Brussels.

Enquiries about the assignment can be directed to Dao Phuong Thuy, GENTLE project coordinator, thuy.dp@vvoe.org or (+84)2363923332.

The service provider(s)/consultant(s) will be expected to perform the duties under the overall supervision of VVOB. (S)He will regularly coordinate and cooperate with GENTLE staff at VVOB to implement the duties as mentioned in the ToRs.

9.5 METHOD OF PAYMENT

The performance fees will be paid by means of a bank transfer into the bank account opened in the name of the service provider. The payment will be made in 3 phases:

- 30% of the professional fee will be paid upon receipt and approval of the inception report by the evaluation steering group
- 30% of the professional fee will be paid after receipt of draft evaluation report and feedback by the evaluation steering group
- Final payment will be made upon receipt and approval of final evaluation report by evaluation steering group.