REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL: No. RFP/2023/024
Annex A: Terms of Reference
for Digital Learning Services that aim to enhance refugee access to distance learning

Key Information at glance about the solution	
Title of the TORs:	Digital Learning Services that enhance Refugee Distance Learning
Duty Station:	System to be rolled out in North and South governorates
Contract Type:	Contract with Tech Firm
Duration:	2024 with possibility of extension to 2025 and 2026
Date	One Year Frame Agreement extendable to 2 other periods (1 year each) as of December 2023/January 2024

0- Background Information and Rationale

For the past three years, Lebanon's education systems had to respond to multiple crises, including the economic crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Beirut blast, which have put a severe strain on the already struggling public education system. Lebanon hosts around 480,000 registered school-aged Syrian refugee children and youth between 3 and 24 years old who have faced many challenges in accessing distance and in-school learning, both formal and non-formal education. School frequent closures due to teachers strikes and regular interruption to education have incurred learning losses for all children accessing formal and non-formal education, the most vulnerable refugee children and youth. The compounded crises presented additional challenges for refugee children as they lack access to electronic devices, internet connectivity or electricity, an environment at home that is conducive for learning, or whose parents lack the literacy or capacity to understand distance learning requirements and support with homework.

One of UNHCR Education priorities remains to support the continuity of learning for refugee children, self-based learning and to prevent refugee drop out; strengthen parental engagement in the education of their children; and mainstream mental health, and violence prevention in education programmes.

According to Protection Monitoring Data collected by UNHCR in 2023, unaffordable transport is cited as a primary reason for refugee parents not sending children to school, in addition to increases in school related costs such as stationery and books. Vasyr 2022 shows that the cost of transportation is the main reason of not attending school; 33% of families in the North and South reported the cost of transportation as the main barrier hindering attendance in school.

As mitigation measure to overcome these barriers and in the contact of school interruption, a big chunk of UNHCR in-person activities have been largely adapted to remote implementation modalities. Hybrid and online learning have been introduced as of 2021 in education programmes targeting refugee children and youth enrolled in community-based activities aimed to promote refugee retention in formal education and in non-formal education activities aimed to transfer numeracy and literacy skills to children to prepare them for the future. Community-based homework support as well as catchup classes outside schools in community venues target students at risk of dropping out of school in order to facilitate their transition from primary to secondary schools.

A number of Homework support activities has been taking place remotely via messaging applications; facilitators prepare and share lessons with students messaging applications groups once to three times per week. They are available over the phone to answer the students' questions and clarifications. They regularly check the lessons shared by schools to identify the topics that are difficult for children to understand and send a detailed explanation. Students benefiting from Basic Literacy and Numeracy classes have been receiving voice notes and worksheets once or twice per week, and educators provide corrections and guidance online. Educators collect feedback to assess the efficiency of the content delivery.

Interactive digital learning platforms are essential to help children learn online, at their own pace, according to their own Internet connectivity. Platforms are also crucial for teachers and educators to deliver their educational content to students effectively, organize courses, track the completion percentage, assess, and monitor the learning outcomes.

Following the success of the roll out of hybrid learning and the use of digital educational services, UNHCR is seeking to extend the provision of digital learning services to enhance the refugee digital learning experience and to contribute to quality learning in retention and non-formal education programmes targeting refugee children and youth.

1- Objectives

To enhance refugee digital learning experience, UNHCR is seeking to contract a supplier that delivers educational material over common messaging applications[1]. UNHCR is looking to sign a one-year frame agreement, potentially extendable for a further two (2) periods of one (1) year each, with a tech firm that provides interactive educational solutions linked to common messaging to facilitate access to education for refugee children and youth. The selected solution should address the main barriers hindering refugee access to distance learning like lack or limited access to, the internet, electronic devices, electricity, books/paper-based materials, technological literacy, and learning support from parents/caretakers. Moreover, the solution should enhance the learning experience of refugee children and teachers accessing distance learning.

UNHCR is seeking an easy-to-use, learner-centric, and organized platform which will allow educators and facilitators of UNHCR community-based activities to effectively track, analyse and organize the participants within the targeted activities.

The intended platforms aim at improving the communication channels between students and learners, thereby promoting, and enhancing the effectiveness of refugee online learning.

2- Scope of the requirement for service provision

The system should be linked to the existing educational retention (Homework support) and non-formal education activities via common messaging and should allow children enrolled in UNHCR remedial programmes (Homework support/retention) and Non-Formal Education (Basic Literacy and Numeracy) to:

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[1] Messaging applications (social messaging or chat applications) are applications and platforms that enable instant messaging. The messaging application will be defined based on UNHCR IT recommendations.

1. Learn through different platforms (even if they access the same device in the same household) so they can learn at their own pace on the phone and won't interfere with each other.
2. Learn through voice notes to fully understand the questions and lessons (for those with no literacy skills) and in Arabic for those struggling with foreign language
3. Go through the course with minimal instructor interference with the help of the educational platform chatbot
4. Receive messages individually and can reply with text, emojis, images, videos, or voice notes
5. Interact with educators directly or through an automated chatbot that tracks learners in real-time

It would also allow educators/facilitators to:
1. Deliver courses entirely on common messaging
2. Manage students at scale with the ability to track, interact and collect insights on performance
3. Predefine messages and expected answers on the platform
4. Automatically calculates pre and post-assessment scores for students based on their messaging applications responses
5. Customize content of educational programmes by converting videos to links
6. Register and follow up with children and monitor their learning outcomes in real-time
7. Interact with each student individually based on their response

3- Approach and Methodology

UNHCR is seeking to commission a private tech firm specialized in education interventions, preferably one with previous working experience with educational institutions, UN sister agencies and familiar with the challenges refugee children are facing in the context of school closure and distance learning. The selected supplier should have prior direct working experience with teachers, instructors, and learners involved in online learning.

4- Anticipated startup of the contract

The system is expected to be up and running by January 2024, and to be linked to the upcoming cycles of the non-formal education activities and retention support programmes planned by partners in the South and in the North governorates during the academic year.

5- Deliverable and schedule

The platform is expected to be accessible to refugee children and linked to current UNHCR education activities as of January 2024. Refugee children and youth enrolled in Basic Literacy and Numeracy classes and retention programmes (including Homework support) as well as educators and facilitators of these activities will benefit from the system.

The selected supplier is also required to:
a. Digitize content used (in Arabic, English, and French) during the activity.
b. Provide content support to partners and educators who will access the system. The supplier is expected to support the content transformation from books and teacher

content into digital info including bite chunked information of images, videos, messages, or voice notes as relevant.

    c. Deliver training to UNHCR partners to enable them to transform the educational content into digital e-learning experiences and to support them to manage students and track their progress.

    d. Create a database of users (children benefiting from the software) and the management of the users shall be transferred to UNHCR and its current partners.

UNHCR will maintain control over the management of users and direct contact with beneficiaries however the selected supplier will be requested to support where needed.

The supplier will be liable for getting the necessary license agreement and all payments needed for the use of any third-party messaging platform as a base for its educational platform.

The system will be linked to an existing education programme that is currently implemented by UNHCR partner/s and targeting refugee children who are out of school, or in school at the risk of drop out. Such programmes include Basic Literacy, Youth Basic Literacy and Numeracy, Homework support activity and other retention programmes designed to support refugee children to remain in school; Once the application is linked to the relevant activity, children benefiting from this programme will get the chance to access an interface that allows them to access content (videos, images, text messages, audio messages), real-time assessment tools and the option of human teacher interaction/intervention when necessary.

Educators of these classes will have the ability to create courses and assign content to children enrolled in the programme, equipped with analytics to track the students' progress.

6- Governance, Accountability and Verification of Services Rendered

The supplier is required to sign the UNHCR Code of Conduct, complete relevant online mandatory induction training, and respect UNHCR's Data Protection Policy, including confidentiality requirements. Data protection conditions with respect to the processing of personal data of persons of concern to UNHCR will also form part of the contract / frame agreement with the supplier.

UNHCR or its implementing partners will be assisting with the implementation and roll out of the system in the respective field offices in the North and South.

7- Payment Mechanism

The supplier is requested to provide costing based on licensing per user. The total cost will depend on the number of active users who will benefit from the system in each governorate, verified by UNHCR or its implementing partners.

Activity	2024 Target
Youth BLN	100 children in North
Homework Support	200 children in South

The number of users stated here aim to enable bidders to have an indication of the projected requirements. It does not represent a commitment that UNHCR will have a minimum number

of users. Number of users may vary and will depend on the actual requirements and funds available regulated by issuance of individual Purchase Orders against the Frame Agreement.

Payment will follow the verification of the system and will be contingent to deliverables set in the "Deliverables and Schedule" section:

Deliverables	Verification
Digital Transformation	Digital link to be provided
Content Upload	Through access to App
Training on App Usage	Training agenda and material to be provided
Accounts creation and activation	System Administrator confirmation

Regular payments that are linked to deliverables will be transferred to the supplier based on payment terms agreed on with supplier.

8- Confidentiality

All applications, interfaces, or source codes produced by the Contractor in connection with this contract shall be the property of UNHCR and shall be treated as confidential and shall be delivered only to duly authorized UNHCR officials on completion of the work or services under the contract. For confidentiality purposes, UNHCR may request to have the solution installed in-house or on a recommended cloud-based environment.

9- Security

The solution must have advanced security features inbuilt so that the software has all the checks and balances to ensure the integrity of data and the software does not have any flaws or bugs which inadvertently or by design, permit the users to tamper, alter or modify any data without the appropriate permissions.

The software should provide the highest degree of security in the architecture. The Supplier must suggest a suitable security component required in software. In case of any failure, the Supplier shall be liable. The following are some of the security issues, but not limited to, which must be addressed:

- The system would ensure that the users follow login procedures.
- The access to the database should be based on the user roles of the organization.
- A proper system logging mechanism and audit trail must be built within the solution.
- SSL Certificate should be installed.

In addition to the above, the application must comply with the annexed UNHCR security requirements (Annex: Security Requirements for Application Projects).

10- Client Support

The selected supplier shall liaise with UNHCR field offices regarding the planning, training, day-to-day implementation, and follow-up /monitoring of the activity.

The supplier will coordinate and support UNHCR Partners who will be responsible for:

- Follow-up on teachers/facilitators lesson plans and attendance
- Ensuring that the content is available, and lessons are conducted as planned

- Monitor on-going classes and fill teachers/facilitators evaluation forms
- Follow-up with teachers/facilitators on the students' attendance and absentees
- Fill in surveys/questionnaires related to implemented activities as applicable

11- Helpdesk and Ticket Tracking

Each ticket submitted to the Contractor's dedicated helpdesk platform should be followed-up with a technical response within 36 hours or less based on the priority of the ticket. The Contractor must understand the importance of monitoring the status of each helpdesk ticket and follow-up on the specific actions taken based on the type of technical support required.

Ticket Response Time. Over the course of any day, the Helpdesk will scan for new tickets submitted. Consistent with our approach to reduce the helpdesk burden of responses, we will make every effort to resolve the issue first with our current knowledge base before referring the issue to the appropriate technical level for assistance. We propose the following strategy for ticket prioritization and escalation.

Level	Description	Helpdesk Response Time
High Priority	**Showstopper Defect**. A group of users or an individual user is unable to perform work due to a platform problem	Helpdesk will respond to a High Priority showstopper ticket within 12 hours, with a commitment to try to respond with 3 hours, depending on the time zone.
	Defect. A group of users or an individual user reports a defect.	Helpdesk will respond to a High Priority defect ticket within 24 hours to assess the issues and provide guidance.
Medium Priority	**Data and Training.** A group of users or an individual user requests assistance on data, hosting, training, mapping, configuration/setup, advocacy materials.	Helpdesk will respond to a Medium Priority ticket within 24 hours to assess the issues and provide guidance.
Low Priority	**Information and Enhancement Requests.** A group of users or an individual user has a question about how to do something which is a training issue. This also applies to requests for software enhancements.	Helpdesk will respond to a Low Priority ticket within 36 hours to provide guidance.

Contact Details for Escalation of Helpdesk Tickets:

Level 1 Technical (Please provide contact details)
Level 2 Manager (Please provide contact details)
Level 3 Executive (Please provide contact details)

12- Reporting requirements and Evaluation criteria / Key performance indicators

The selected company will be accountable for its deliverables to the UNHCR Education unit at Beirut Office (BO).   Monitoring of the activity will take place by UNHCR and/or its implementing partners. The system should produce standard reports and interactive dashboards linked to learners' attendance, interaction, assessments, grades, surveys/questionnaires results, etc.

The main indicators to be reflected:
- Number of students attending 10% of the total sessions disaggregated by activity governorate, nationality, and gender.
- Number of students per activity and governorate attending 70% of the total sessions disaggregated by activity, governorate, nationality, and gender.
- Number of facilitators using the platform disaggregated by activity, governorate, nationality, and gender.