



Terms of Reference: Reusable MHM Products Piloting Research

Project Title	Menstrual Hygiene Management Pilot
Donor	WASH Innovative Fund (Oxfam internal fund)
Project Location	Bekaa (North Bekaa and Tripoli)
Consultancy periods	Over two periods: (July-September 2024 and December February 2025)

1. About Oxfam:

Oxfam is a global movement of people, working together to end the injustice of poverty through campaigning and responding to the needs of the poor. Oxfam has been working in Lebanon since 1993. We provide humanitarian assistance to vulnerable people affected by conflict, and we promote economic justice and good governance, and women’s rights. Oxfam also works with local partners to contribute to the protection and empowerment of marginalized women and men.

2. BACKGROUND:

In the fallout of the economic crisis, and its impact on women and girls’ management of menstrual hygiene, looking for more sustainable long-term alternatives to replace disposable pads by MHM reusable products has become even more urgent. Many piloting efforts, by Oxfam and other organizations, were conducted to this end, but the results have been largely mixed with a disappointingly low rate of use continuation. This is due to a number of factors, which, according to Oxfam’s Post Distribution Monitoring (PDMs), include the quality of the materials used in the reusable pads (higher percentage of polyester than cotton), the lack of available options for women with heavier flow, and the cultural stigma around publicly washing and hanging up the pads to dry. To respond to the above problem and within the framework of the WASH innovative funding (WIF), **Oxfam is planning to recruit a consultant to conduct a research study** to explore the different challenges related to menstrual hygiene faced by vulnerable women and girls in Lebanon, the different MHM products available (market assessment) and evaluate different pilots done by Oxfam and other organizations.

The research study will analyse women’s distinct lived experiences and practices, focusing on MHM products, safety, and health, and delving into the implications of those challenges on paid work and domestic responsibilities and care work. It will also tackle the communal perceptions and social stigma and look at how those affect women’s and girls’ practices, bodies, and lives. It will build on the data collected in previous pilots by Oxfam in Lebanon and other organizations and analyse and compare the data with the aim of highlighting the acceptance, advantages, and main issues of each product currently available in the markets accessible to the targeted communities. The research will also focus on the results of the Reemi Underwear pilot (MHM innovative product) which Oxfam is planning to pilot in parallel, within two different contexts, **50 women and girls living in informal settlements in North Bekaa** and **50 vulnerable women and**



girls living in Tripoli. It will compare resulting data with other pilots done previously and look at whether the Reemi product managed to better address the concerns and shortcomings of other reusable MHM products. The study will provide recommendations on how to best integrate it into any future project.

Finally, a research paper will be produced that summarises the findings and provides potential solutions and programmatic recommendations for integrating menstrual hygiene management in humanitarian responses, particularly targeted at the WASH, protection, education, and health sectors.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE ASSIGNMENT:

- ✓ **The first objective of the assignment** is to review different pilots on reusable MHM products conducted by Oxfam's and other organizations.

Revision Areas and methodology:

- **Needs assessment:** Has the pilot program clearly identified the specific needs of the target population regarding MHM? This could include factors like access to products, knowledge gaps, cultural sensitivities, use and care concerns and waste disposal concerns.
- **Product selection:** Are the chosen MHM products appropriate for the target population? Consider affordability, cultural preferences, and ease of use/care. Explore innovative options like menstrual cups, reusable pads, or period underwear if suitable.
- **Distribution strategy and access to menstrual products:** Based on the experiences and short fallings of assessed projects, how should the MHM products be distributed? Explore potential for partnering with local organizations, schools, or health clinics for easier access. For access to MHM products, if women and girls have shared their preferred way to receive or access menstrual products? Did past studies looked at distribution modalities - in-kind, vouchers and/or cash; did past studies looked at if distribution happen door to door privately between women or if men are present or not, for vouchers, are men shopkeepers and is this a barrier for women and girls to access MHM products?
- **Education and awareness:** Does the pilot program incorporate educational components on menstrual health, hygiene practices, and safe product use? "In previous studies - was there any research done on the impact of the education session on the attitude or practices, women & girls' perceptions of wellbeing or the reduction of stigma/taboo related to menstrual hygiene".
- **Environmental impact:** If disposable products are used, does the program address waste disposal concerns? Are there plans to promote reusable options or explore biodegradable disposables?
- **Sustainability:** If the women/girls who tried the MHM reusable products continue to use it and to what extent? And if not, what are the main barriers? Is it the dislike of the products, the preferences of other products, the lack of availability on the market, the lack of means to purchase etc.?
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** How to measure the success of an MHM pilot program? Consider collecting data on product usage, participant satisfaction, and changes in knowledge or practices.
- **Reviewing and data triangulation** is reviewing reports shared by Oil and other NGOs focal points who worked on MHM pilots and conduct Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). It will also provide guidance based on international standards on how to improve the existing products to better cater to the local needs and cultural contexts.

- ✓ **The Second objective of the assignment** is to conduct a market assessment on different types of MHM products within the markets in the targeted communities. A thorough MHM product market



assessment involves understanding various factors that influence the demand and supply of menstrual hygiene management products. Here is a breakdown of key areas to consider:

Market size and growth:

- **Target Population:** Define the target population (age, location, income level) to assess the total market size.

Market segmentation:

- **Product types:** Categorize the market by product types (pads, tampons, menstrual cups, period underwear, etc.) and assess their popularity within the target segments (informal settlements and vulnerable Lebanese communities)
- **Price points:** Segment the market by price points (premium, affordable, subsidized) and compare it to the purchasing power of the target populations.
- **Distribution channels:** Analyze the existing distribution channels for MHM products (pharmacies, supermarkets, online retailers, community shops) and their reach within the target segments.

Competitive landscape:

- **Major players:** Identify the key players in the MHM product market, including both domestic and international brands as well as unbranded products (when relevant) across all MHM product's types.

Consumer needs and preferences:

- **Awareness and knowledge:** Assess the level of awareness and knowledge about menstruation and MHM products within the target market.
- **Product preferences:** Identify preferred product types, materials, and features based on factors like comfort, affordability, and ease of use/care.
- **Social and cultural factors:** Consider cultural beliefs and taboos surrounding menstruation that may influence product choices and usage.

Regulatory Environment:

- **Government regulations:** Analyze any government regulations or taxes on MHM products that might affect affordability and market access.
- **Safety and quality standards:** Review existing quality and safety standards for MHM reusable products in the target market (INGOs, governmental, UNFPA standards, sector)

Additional considerations:

- **Sustainability:** Assess the growing demand for sustainable MHMP options and how companies are addressing this trend.



- **Innovation:** Analyze new product developments and technological advancements in the MHM market in the past 3 years.
- **E-commerce:** Evaluate the growing role of e-commerce platforms in selling MHM products and their impact on accessibility for the target segments.
- ✓ **The third objective of the assignment** is to integrate the results generated from the Reem’s underwear pilot (Oxfam will share the results) and to highlight whether this product managed to better address the concerns and shortcomings of other reusable MHM products and will provide recommendations on how to best integrate it into any future project.
- ✓ **The Fourth objective of the assignment** is to produce a research paper that summarises the findings and provide potential solutions and programmatic recommendations for integrating menstrual hygiene management in humanitarian response, particularly targeted at the WASH, protection, education, and health sectors.

4. Expected deliverables:

The researcher is expected to deliver the following:

1. Develop a **detailed inception report and evaluation plan**, outlining the proposed methodology.
2. **Draft evaluation report (English)** to be presented to Oxfam.
3. **Final study report** (including the research paper) incorporating Oxfam input and feedback.

5. TIMEFRAME, KEY ACTIVITIES AND EXPECTED LEVEL OF EFFORT:

Timeframe:

	July 2024				August 2024				September 2024				December 2024				January 2025				February 2025			
Type of deliverable	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1. Inception report including (data collection plan, Research Design & Methodology)																								
2. Data collection and MHM market assessment (outreach to others organisations)																								
3. Analysis of qualitative and quantitative data and compiling relevant data																								
4. to compile and compare results that will be generated from the Reemi’s																								



- Gender sensitivity: Understanding the gendered aspects of MHM and the importance of including diverse voices in research.
- Global health context: Awareness of the global context of MHM, including disparities in access to menstrual products and sanitation facilities in different regions.

Additional Skills:

- Excellent communication skills: The ability to communicate complex research findings to both technical and non-technical audiences.
- Strong writing skills: Ability to write clear, concise, and well-organized research reports and proposals.
- Cultural competency: Sensitivity to different cultural beliefs and practices surrounding menstruation.

Desirable:

- Experience working with a specific target population (e.g., adolescents, women with disabilities).
- Expertise in a particular MHM intervention or program.
- Experience using specific data collection tools or methodologies.

Key Attributes:

1. Diplomacy, tact and influencing skills.
2. Commitment to humanitarian principles and action.
3. Ability to demonstrate sensitivity to cultural differences and gender issues, as well as the commitment to equal opportunities.
4. Commitment to Oxfam's safeguarding policy and Code of Conduct.

7. Payment and instructions for interested consultants.

The first payment (60%) will be done upon Oxfam's approval and completion of service on the below:

1. Delivery of a **detailed inception report and evaluation plan**, outlining the proposed methodology.
2. Delivery of report that includes **(1st, 2nd objectives of the assignments)**

The second payment (40%) will be done upon Oxfam's approval and completion of service on the below:

1. Completion of 3rd and 4th objectives of the assignments
2. **Draft evaluation report (English) that compiles all deliverables (All requested assignments)** to be presented to Oxfam with **two rounds of comments to be provided by Oxfam team.**
3. **Final study report** incorporating Oxfam input and feedback.

Note that payment will be made based on the budget in the offer (not based on actual expenses incurred by the consultant). No receipts will be requested from the consultant towards the end of the contract.



The consultant should share MoF number registration document scanned if registered. If the applicant is not registered with the ministry of finance, the financial proposal will be subject to an 8.5% Non-residential Tax deduction.

Note that payment will be made based on the budget in the offer.

HOW TO APPLY

Oxfam invites EOI from individuals, with the experience and skills described above. The EOI must include:

1. A CV for the consultant or consultant company.
2. A maximum 2-page document outlining similar previous consultancies (along with an explanation of the purpose of the consultancy, who the contracting authority was).
3. Preliminary methodologies including approach to the resources review, focus areas on the analysis, and a workplan with expected required days for the tasks.
4. A one-page budget of the offer, covering all major anticipated costs (see expected deliverables section above on what costs should be included in the offer)

Please submit the EOI and other documents by 20 July 2024 at the latest, to Lebanonprocurement@oxfam.org.uk mentioning in the subject line: "Reusable MHM Products Piloting Research"

All questions or clarifications of a technical nature are to be sent to Lebanonprocurement@oxfam.org.uk

8. DISCLOSURE:

The consultant is not authorized to make any commitments on behalf of Oxfam. All data collected as part of this consultancy belongs to Oxfam and public dissemination of the data and evaluation products can only be done with the written consent of the Oxfam.