**Ministry of Education and Research (MoER)**

**Moldova Higher Education Project (MHEP)**

**Procurement Reference: MD-MOED-368844-CS-INDV**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Individual Consultant to provide assistance in evaluation of Project Proposals**

**in Engineering and engineering trades (071)** **priority field**

**within Higher Education Improvement Program (HEIP)**

* + - 1. **Background information on the project**

Moldova Higher Education Project (MHEP) is a World Bank-financed Project to be implemented between May 2020 and December 2025.

The total cost of credit is EUR 35.7 million (US$39.4 million equivalent) financed by the International Development Association (IDA) and is provided to the Republic of Moldova in support of Moldova Higher Education.

The Project Objective is to improve the labor market orientation of selected higher education institutions and the quality assurance mechanisms. The Project is organized around three components and includes systemic interventions in the areas of higher education quality, financing and management, as well as a targeted program to be implemented by selected higher education institutions and pedagogical colleges to address some of their most pressing needs in labor market orientation.

The MHEP components are described below:

1. Improving the Quality Assurance Mechanisms
2. Improving the Labor Market Orientation through Targeted Interventions
3. Project Management.

*Component 1* ***–*** Improving the Quality Assurance Mechanisms. This component aims to improve Moldova higher education system’s quality assurance mechanisms, which would also contribute to improve its labor market orientation. It comprises three sub-components that support activities in: (i) National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and Quality Assurance (QA); (ii) System Management and Monitoring; (iii) Higher Education Financing.

*Component 2* – Improving the Labor Market Orientation through Targeted Interventions. This component would finance the design and implementation of a targeted and needs-based program (Higher Education Improvement Program - HEIP) aimed at improving the labor market orientation of Moldova’s higher education institutions, as well as their research capacity.

*Component 3* – Project Management. This component would support the day-to-day management of the Project by the MoER with assistance of a dedicated team of individual consultants who would provide managerial, fiduciary, and technical support to the implementation of the proposed Project for its full duration.

Component 2 has **HEIP Preparation** sub-component that will finance technical assistance for the preparation of improvement programs by eligible higher education institutions (HEI) and pedagogical colleges, including the development of guidelines for beneficiaries, evaluation of these proposals, constant and high-quality fiduciary support at the HEIP implementation stage.

Ministry of Education and Research (MoER) would invite eligible public higher education institutions and pedagogical colleges to prepare proposals for addressing their needs in labor market orientation, research and learning.

In this context, and towards successful implementation of the sub-financing scheme, the Individual Consultants (IC) will act as external experts and will be selected to support MoER in the selection of the best project proposals received in the Engineering and engineering trades (071) priority field.

* + - 1. **Objective(s) of the assignment**

The main objective of assignment for ICs is to carry out detailed examination/evaluation of project proposals related to the field of Engineering and engineering trades (071) and related annexes (Results Framework and Monitoring, Sub-Project Implementation Plan) as well as, the supporting documents in accordance with HEIPOM. These assessments will be used by the multi – disciplinary Evaluation Committee in the process of selecting the best proposals.

* + - 1. **Scope of Work**

The evaluation of project proposals received in the Engineering and engineering trades (071) field will be conducted respecting HEIPOM and Detailed Assessment Grid for Full Application. To ensure impartial, professional and smooth assessment process the ICs/external experts will be given proper documentation and guidelines.

Each project proposal must be assessed by two ICs/external experts for each priority field (or fundamental field) related to the project proposal, working independently of each other. The overall assessment should be based on the scores obtained under each subheading, added up by heading and the final score is the arithmetical average of the scores given by the ICs/external experts. Each application must be assessed on its own merits and not by comparing different project proposals.

The ICs/external experts are expected to bring their own expertise and experience of the Engineering and engineering trades (071) sector and project implementation to bear in the analysis of each project proposal in determined priority field.

The Is/external experts may be invited to the External Commission and multi – disciplinary Evaluation Committee meetings to justify and discuss his/her assessment of the project proposals.

The ICs/external experts are required to submit their evaluations - the completed signed original paper of the Detailed Assessment Grid for Full Application to the External Commission and multi – disciplinary Evaluation Committee.

The ICs/external experts shall contribute to the successful completion of the evaluation process by providing:

* Qualitative evaluation of the project proposals in line with the HEIPOM, evaluation grid offered by MoER/ PMT, and the relevant project documents;
* His/her own experience of the sector and project implementation and implement it in the analysis of each project proposal;
* Filling in of the evaluation grids for each project proposal evaluation, with each grid providing a scored assessment and textual comments;
* Presentation of coherent comments and scores. Comments must reflect the scores given, illustrating the scores per question and section of the evaluation grid;
* A list of identified issues, per project proposal, for funding requiring clarification;
* Further additional comments in justified cases upon request of the MoER, PMT, External Commission and multi – disciplinary Evaluation Committee.
* For each field, there will be two consultants that will review the corresponding applications. The individual consultants will provide their objective independent evaluation for each application. The PMT will monitor and register the list of reviewed applications.
  + - 1. **Qualification requirements and basis for evaluation (evaluation criteria)**

**General experience (30 points):**

* Higher education in Engineering and engineering trades or related field;
* Strong experience in the area of management, implementation and delivery of online, and offline trainings;
* At least 5 years of managerial and/or teaching activity in higher education.

**Adequacy for Project (50 points):**

* Practical experience in Results Based Management including program development, execution, and training on result frameworks;
* Proved expertise in the Engineering and engineering trades (071) sector and knowledge in the national legislation of the field of his/her professional expertise;
* Knowledge about the latest developments in the sector;
* Experience in the assessment of projects financed by national or international financial institution;
* Sound knowledge of the World Bank or similar international organizations/agencies rules and procedures would be an asset;
* Good understanding of higher education sector priorities and higher education institutions’ needs;
* Excellent analytical skills.

**Language and Experience (20 points):**

* Excellent knowledge of Romanian and English languages;
* Excellent writing and communication skills;
* Experience with Microsoft Office package (Word, Excel, Power Point, etc.);
* Proven ability to work under pressure and be flexible, including the ability to cope with deadlines, multiple tasks, competing and changing demands.
  + - 1. **Duration of the assignment**

This consultancy is expected to last maximum 100 days starting from July 2023, but no more than the Project closing day. The deliverables to be submitted will be as follows:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Deliverables | Submission Deadline | Approval by |
| Qualitative evaluation of the project proposals in line with the HEIPOM, evaluation grid offered by MoER/ PMT, and the relevant project documents:   * the evaluation grids for each project proposal evaluation, with each grid providing a scored assessment and textual comments. * coherent comments and scores (comments must reflect the scores offered. * illustrating the scores per question and section of the evaluation grid); * a list of identified issues, per project proposal, for funding requiring clarification | 4 weeks from receiving each of the proposal |  |
| Final reports with evaluation grids, submitted in Romanian and/or English including a list of identified issues, per project proposal, for funding requiring clarification; also including additional comments in justified cases upon from the MoER, PMT, External Commission and multi – disciplinary Evaluation Committee. | 8 weeks from receiving the project proposals |  |

All reports shall be submitted in Romanian and/or English, in electronic format (MS Office) to MoER. Period of approval of reports will not exceed 10 working days from the submission date to MoER or returned for further completion. The submission date is considered the date MoER confirms receiving the deliverables.

In case the work carried out by the external experts will be of poor quality, delayed or not in line with the contract and documents specified, the MoER will ask the assessor to amend or complement its assessment. The ICs/external experts will have two working days to do so. If he/she will not provide satisfactory amendments/completions, the MoER will be allowed to cancel the remuneration for the assessment in question and to withdraw the assessor from the pool.

* + - 1. **Institutional Arrangements**

The ICs/external experts will report to the Project Executive Director, MHEP Project Coordinator, HEIP Officer and the Higher Education Policies Department. The Project Management Team will oversee the process of consulting services, manage the implementation of the contract.

The MoER and Project team will provide the ICs/external consultants the necessary support to complete the assignment: project documents necessary for assignment accomplishment, necessary work conditions and support.

* + - 1. **Confidentiality statement**

All data and information received from MoER for the purpose of this assignment is to be treated confidentially and are only to be used in connection with the execution of these Terms of Reference. All intellectual property rights arising from the execution of these Terms of Reference are assigned to MoER. The contents of written materials obtained and used in this assignment may not be disclosed to any third parties without the expressed advance written authorization of the MoER.

* + - 1. **Eligibility**

The consultant should be eligible based on the World Bank Procurement Guidance on Conflict of Interest in Evaluation Committees, published in January, 2020[[1]](#endnote-1). The Consultant will be asked to sign the Declaration of any conflict of interest. The consultant will not be involved in evaluations of proposals, submitted by the institutions where he/she works full or part time.

1. [https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/240891579889685786- 0290022020/original/ProcurementGuidanceConflictofInterest.pdf](https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/240891579889685786-%200290022020/original/ProcurementGuidanceConflictofInterest.pdf) [↑](#endnote-ref-1)