Ministry of Education and Research (MoER)

**Moldova Higher Education Project (MHEP)**

**Procurement Reference: MD-MOED-206417-CS-CQS**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Consulting company** **to conduct two surveys (baseline and progress) with Project beneficiaries to determine if effective engagement processes have been established through the Project**

* + - 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.

Stakeholder engagement activities under MHEP will include organization of consultative forums, public meetings, round tables, trainings and workshops, participatory planning and decision-making activities, establishment and management of a Project Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), media and social media communication, disclosure of written materials, involvement of communication/ public relations officers from higher educational institutions and pedagogical colleges, as well as surveys conducted among affected individuals to gauge satisfaction with the quality of citizen engagement and share additional concerns.

In this context, the MoER intends to hire a Consulting Company to conduct national wide surveys (baseline and progress) with Project beneficiaries who report that effective engagement processes have been established through the Project. The surveys data will be used to report on the Project Intermediary Indicator: *Project beneficiaries reporting that effective engagement processes have been established*. This indicator measures the increase in the share of project beneficiaries who report that effective engagement processes have been established through the Project.

Beneficiaries to be considered for the measurement of this indicator include university and pedagogical college students, their teachers, staff of their institutions, and representatives of firms from the major sectors that employ graduates from their institutions. Effective engagement processes require participatory approaches to involve beneficiaries in.

* + - 1. **Objective of the assignment**

The objective of the consultancy is to conduct 2 surveys (baseline and progress) with Project beneficiaries to determine if effective engagement processes have been established through the Project.

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

In order to achieve the objective, the Consulting Company shall perform the following tasks:

**Task 1. Develop the research methodology and the action plan for the surveys.**

The methodology will include activities and tools for collecting data to determine if effective engagement processes have been established for Project beneficiaries and describe different methods applied for conducting the surveys as well as the sampling method.

The research methodology and the action plan shall be approved by the MoER.

**Task 2. Conduct the Surveys, based on the research methodology and the action plan, approved by the MoER.** The following activities shall be carried out under this task:

* desk review of documents related to Project activities and objectives;
* collect, systematize and analyse quantitative and qualitative data in order to determine baseline indicators;
* collect, systematize and analyse quantitative and qualitative data in order to determine if effective engagement processes have been established for Project beneficiaries.

**Task 3. Develop the analytical report for the baseline analysis on the results of the survey.** The reports will include:

1. Description of different methods and tools applied in order to determine if effective engagement processes have been established for Project beneficiaries;
2. analytical framework - the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data collected;
3. conclusions on the survey conducted and recommendations.

**Task 4. Develop the analytical report on progress in measuring if effective engagement processes have been established.** The report will include:

1. Description of different methods and tools applied in order to determine if effective engagement processes have been established for Project beneficiaries;
2. analytical framework - the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data collected;
3. comparison and progress review compared to baseline survey;

conclusions on the surveys conducted and recommendations

* + - 1. **Qualification requirements and basis for evaluation (evaluation criteria)**

The Consulting company shall have proven experience in:

1. *General experience:*

* At least 5 years of experience in conducting surveys, qualitative studies, market research and data analysis;
* Experience in conducting surveys with higher education institutions would be an advantage.

1. *Specific experience:*

* Experience in developing methodology for sociological surveys and studies (both quantitative and qualitative);
* Experience in statistical analysis of collected data, elaboration of analytical reports and presentation of results;
* Team members with experience in carrying out sociological and research work;
* Experience in at least one similar assignment would be an asset.
  + - 1. **Duration of the assignment, estimated time input and expected outcomes**

This consultancy is expected to start in April 2022 until December 31, 2024, with the deliverables submitted as follow:

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| Deliverables | Submission Deadline | Approval by |
| The Inception report that includes the following: (i) research methodology of the Surveys; and (ii) detailed action plan, (iii) proposed structure of the baseline report and proposed structure of the final report | 4 weeks from signing the contract | MoER (Higher Education Policies Department) |
| Developed tools for data collection and mobilization of the team who will conduct field work | 7 weeks from contract signing | MoER (Higher Education Policies Department) |
| First report with baseline data | 16 weeks from signing the contract | MoER (Higher Education Policies Department) |
| Review tools for data collection and mobilization of the team who will conduct field work | May-June 2024 | MoER (Higher Education Policies Department) |
| The final report on the results of the progress Survey, progress and comparisons with baseline results, conclusions and recommendations. | December 31, 2024 | MoER (Higher Education Policies Department) |

All reports shall be submitted in Romanian in electronic format to MoER. The final reports shall be submitted in Romanian and English language and shall be submitted electronically and in hard-copy. Period for 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.

* + - 1. **Institutional Arrangements**

The team leader will report to the Project Coordinator, Project Executive Director and Head of the Higher Education Policies Department of the MoER. 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 contracted company the necessary support to complete the assignment: Project documents necessary for assignment accomplishment.

**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.