

MOLDOVA HIGHER EDUCATION PROJECT
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND RESEARCH

TERMS OF REFERENCE
HIGHER EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM OFFICER
(HEIP OFFICER)

A. BACKGROUND

„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 an International Development Association (IDA) and is provided to the Republic of Moldova in support of Moldova Higher Education Project.

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 universities 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 MoECR 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. In this context, a HEIP Officer will be hired and will be responsible for overall implementation of the Component 2 of the Project and mainly fiduciary oversight in the beneficiaries use of the improvement programs’ resources. The HEIP Officer will assist and provide technical support to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research and Project management team, to ensure systematic arrangements during the project implementation.

B. OBJECTIVE OF THE CONSULTANCY

The main role of the HEIP Officer is to manage the implementation of HEIP activities under Component 2. He/she is responsible for supervising all financial management and procurement activities for the beneficiaries of improvement programs.

The HEIP Officer participates in review and evaluation of improvement programs proposals, and is responsible for monitoring of subprojects implementation and reviewing of progress reports prepared by the beneficiaries of improvement programs. He/she is responsible for day-to-day communication with representatives of MoECR – mainly the Higher Education Department and Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Department - in charge of implementing higher education activities financed by the Project, as well as with HEIP beneficiaries.

C. SPECIFIC TASKS

To achieve the assignment's objectives, the Consultant shall perform the following tasks:

Initiating Phase:

Review and master the following key documents that will be used along the project life cycle:

- Project Appraisal Document;
- Financing Agreement;
- Disbursement Letter for IDA Credit;
- Procurement Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works, and Non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers;
- Guidelines on Preventing and Combating Fraud and Corruption in Projects Financed by IBRD Loans and IDA Credits;
- POM;
- Other relevant documents suggested by the Project Executive Director.

Planning Phase:

- Develop the HEIP Operations Manual;
- Develop the HEIP working plan for 2020-2025;
- Develop the HEIP Annual Operational Plan (every year).
- Conduct sessions with the PMT to review the key documents described above;
- Coordinate the development of the HEIP Procurement Plan (every year);
- Prepare documents to conduct selection processes of HEIP beneficiaries;
- Perform initial administrative control of project proposals.

Execution and Monitoring Phase:

- HEIP Officer with support of PMT will be responsible for fiduciary issues with regard to grants implementation: (i) ensuring that formal processes of procurement is functioning according to the Bank guidelines and perform its prior and post review with support of Procurement Specialist; (ii) check and transfer the RFPs to Project Coordinator and Financial Management Specialist for disbursement of funds based on withdrawal application prepared by the grant recipients; and (iii) evaluate and send for approval to Project Coordinator the financial and narrative reports prepared by grant recipients concerning the use of grant funds.
- Supervise and monitor the implementation of the HEIP following the HEIP Operations Manual;
- Supervise and monitor the implementation of the HEIP working plan for 2020-2025;
- Supervise and monitor the implementation of the HEIP Annual Operational Plan;
- Supervise and monitor the implementation of the HEIP Procurement Plan;
- Keep track the progress of the HEIP indicators;
- Participate in technical and operational meetings required by Project Coordinator;
- Participate in meeting with World Bank representatives during supervision missions required by the project Coordinator;
- Prepare project report documents related to the HEIP subcomponent and other activities described in the HEIP operations manual;
- Ensure that key information is regularly collected and tracked so the Project can measure the progress towards the subcomponent objectives; Ensure that records are maintained of all applications, approvals and claims as defined in the HEIPOM; Provide support to HEIP beneficiaries in preparation of their application forms according the HEIPOM;
- Participate in field visits to supervise the progress of the HEIP beneficiaries on project implementation as required by the Project Coordinator;

- Support the Project Coordinator in other activities defined in the HEIPOM;
- Evaluate the operation and performance of the HEIP and propose any changes or additions required to ensure that the objectives will be achieved;
- Ensure that all accounting procedures and internal controls related to HEIP subcomponent, are adequately documented;
- Ensure that rapid and complete records are maintained of all applications, approvals, claims and payments;

Closing

- Organize and archive all information collected during the Project life cycle according the Project Operational Manual and the HEIP Operational Manual relevant to HEIP subcomponent;
- Ensure that all consultancy products and services hired under the project are delivered before the closing date of the Project;
- Ensure that all the HEIP indicators are achieved;
- Support the Project Coordinator in organizing a final dissemination event to show the results and impact achieved by the HEIP subcomponent.

D. DURATION

This is a full-time assignment expected to begin in September 2020. The contract will be signed for a period of 12 months. Subject to Consultant's satisfactory performance, the contract may be renewed until the Closing Date of the project on December 31, 2025.

E. CONSULTANT'S REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

The consultant to be hired in accordance with the proposed assignment should prepare monthly reports on all activities performed. This monthly report should be subject to approval of MHEP Project Coordinator. The consultant reports to MHEP Project Coordinator.

The MoECR and Project team will provide the Consultant with necessary support to complete the assignment: project documents necessary for assignment accomplishment, necessary work conditions, including office space, telephone, fax and other office equipment and supplies.

F. QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS AND BASIS FOR EVALUATION (EVALUATION CRITERIA)

The Consultant should meet the following qualifications:

- University degree in economics, public administration or related field;
- Good knowledge of the higher education sector of Moldova and their needs with experience in implementing tools and/or programs to support higher education sector or other relevant sector in Moldova (at least 3 years);
- Previous experience working with the Bank - supported projects would be an asset;
- Practical experience of working in the field of grant management and monitoring, with knowledge of the Bank or other IFIs' procurement procedures, will be a strong asset;
- Proven experience of working with national authorities, programme/project support or other relevant fields is an advantage;
- Strong communication and teamwork skills;
- Fluency in Romanian and English and ability to develop documents in English;
- Computer proficiency (Windows, MS Office, Internet Explorer).