

Ministry of Education, Culture and Research (MoECR)
Moldova Higher Education Project (MHEP)

Procurement Reference: MD-MOED-206322-CS-INDV

TERMS OF REFERENCE
Procurement Consultant 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 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.

Component 2 has **HEIP Preparation** sub-component that will finance technical assistance for the preparation of improvement programs by eligible higher education institutions 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 and the adaptation or development of a tool for engaging stakeholders in the design and implementation of the HEIP (participatory planning and decision making). Stakeholder engagement is an inclusive process that must be conducted throughout the project life cycle, during the project preparation stage through to implementation and closure of the project.

In this context, and toward successful implementation of the sub-financing scheme, one procurement consultant (PC) will be selected who will assist and provide technical support to higher education institutions and pedagogical colleges to be selected within the HEIP team in order to perform all relevant procurement procedures and to ensure systematic procurement arrangements during HEIP project implementation.

2. Objective(s) of the assignment

During the sub-financing scheme implementation, the PC assists the MoECR Project Management Team (PMT) with procurement procedures of the Component 2 in accordance with the provisions of the Development Financing Agreement, Procurement Regulations and HEIP Operations Manual (HEIPOM); the PC also assists HEIP beneficiaries in strengthening their own procurement knowledge and capacities. The PC is responsible for coaching the sub-financing beneficiaries on procuring goods and services under improvement programs subcomponent.

3. Scope of Work

The PC to be hired based on these Terms of Reference shall:

- In cooperation with HEIP Officer and MoECR, carry out all procurement activities related to the Component 2 of the Project in accordance with the World Bank Procurement Regulations for Investment Project Financing Borrowers – Procurement in Investment Project Financing of Goods, Works, Non-Consulting and Consulting Services, issued on July 1, 2016, revised on November 1, 2016 and August 1, 2018 (hereinafter referred to as “Procurement Regulations”).
- Advise and coach sub-financing beneficiaries’ staff on all procurement related matters and assist in communicating to the Bank.
- Elaborate and share with sub-financing beneficiaries’ staff the templates of tender documents for procurement following national market in accordance with provisions of HEIP POM.
- Liaise with beneficiaries’ departments / institutions to finalize technical specifications for equipment to be procured for them and assure that technical specifications are vendor neutral.
- Offer support in development of the beneficiaries’ Procurement Plan in accordance with the World Bank requirements.
- Provide advice, mentoring, coaching and improve the procurement capacity of the sub-financing beneficiaries’ staff. Support and guide in preparation of good quality Terms of Reference and technical specifications.
- Offer support in updating on a regular basis the beneficiaries’ Project Procurement Plan (PP) and submitting it to the MoECR and the Bank for review and approval.
- Support beneficiaries in uploading the PP in Systematic Tracking of Exchanges in Procurement (STEP), Bank’s online procurement planning and tracking tool to prepare, clear and update the PP and conduct all procurement transactions under the project.
- Offer the full support in organization and conducting the training courses for the sub-financing beneficiaries on procurement aspects.
- Monitor progress for PPs implementation and present updated information related to sub-financing beneficiaries’ activities.
- Monitor contracts implementation.
- Prepare regular procurement monitoring reports related to the sub-financing scheme the for the MoECR and the World Bank.
- Monitor and ensure timely responses to procurement questions raised by the Bank on aspect related to sub-financing beneficiaries’ activities.
- Provide procurement advisory services to sub-financing beneficiaries’ as and when needed.

- Participate in technical and operational meetings required by the Project Coordinator.
- Carry out any other activities related to Project procurement and reporting linked to sub-financing scheme as indicated by the Project Coordinator.

4. Duration of the assignment

This assignment is a full-time assignment (subject to 8 hours per day) expected to begin in June 2021. The contract will be signed for a period of 12 months.

Subject to Consultant's satisfactory performance, the contract may be renewed until September 2025, but no more than the Project closing day. The PC will submit a report related to the activities performed, on a monthly basis. All reports shall be submitted in Romanian or/and English, upon necessity.

5. Qualification requirements and basis for evaluation (evaluation criteria)

The Consultant to be hired should meet the following qualifications:

- Higher education degree in economics, law, public administration, or related field;
- Proven expertise and knowledge of the World Bank or similar international organizations/agencies procurement rules and procedures;
- Proven expertise and knowledge of the national public procurement regulations and procedures;
- At least 3 years of working experience in the field of procurement in projects financed by the World Bank or other international organizations/agencies;
- Excellent knowledge of English and Romanian (both written and oral);
- Excellent knowledge of common PC office tools;
- Knowledge and expertise in the area of education would be an asset;
- Excellent communication and presentation skills.

6. Consultant's Reporting Obligations and Institutional Arrangements

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 will report to the Project Coordinator, Project Executive Director and Head of the Higher Education Policies Department of the MoECR.

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.

Confidentiality statement: All data and information received from MoECR 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 MoECR. 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 MoECR.