EDUCATION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT Project

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH**

**Reference No.: MD-MOED-400759-CS-INDV**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**SCHOOL GRANTS OFFICER**

1. **BACKGROUND**

„Education Quality Improvement” Project (EQIP) is a World Bank (hereinafter “the Bank”) - financed Project to be implemented between June 2023 and December 2029.

The total cost of the Project is US$ 59.8million equivalent comprising (i) a non-concessional portion in the amount of EUR36.5 million (US$40 million equivalent),(ii) a concessional portion in the amount of US$10 million under the Global Concessional Financing Facility (GCFF) on a non-reimbursable basis (Loan No. IBRD 9536-MD), (iii) grant in the amount of US$5 million from the Early Learning Partnership Multi-Donor Trust Fund (TF0C1507) and (iv) a grant in the amount of US$4.8 million from the Global Partnership for Education Fund (TF0C1484).

The project development objectives are to: (i) improve the learning environment in Participating Institutions, with an emphasis on supporting Disadvantaged Students; and (ii) strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Education and Research for sector management and refugee response. The Project is organized around four components and its objectives will be achieved through improved teacher practices, a learning recovery program for disadvantaged students, an improved learning environment in targeted schools and preschools, and the development of the institutional capacity to design, implement and evaluate education reforms and refugee response interventions. The proposed Contingent Emergency Response Component under fourth part will support the country’s future response in the event of a natural or manmade disaster or emergency.

The EQIP components are described below:

1. *Component 1* - Improve Quality of Teaching Practices. This component aims to (i) improve the quality of teaching; (ii) develop, pilot, and implement a rapid formative assessment, a Learning Recovery Program, and a supplemental tutoring for Disadvantaged Students; and (iii) develop School Subprojects through the provision of School Grants (SG) to support in-service teacher professional development opportunities.
2. *Component 2* ­– Improve the Quality of Learning Environment in Participating Institutions. This component aims to improve the learning environment of Participating Institutions through (i) equipping Participating Institutions with furniture and equipment; (ii) carrying out civil works for the rehabilitation of Participating Institutions and Selected ECEC Facilities; and (iii) construction of three (3) high schools in Priority Areas.
3. *Component 3* – Strengthening the Capacity for Education Sector Management and Refugee Response. This component would support (i) improvement in planning, management, and evaluation of education reforms and (ii) Project Management.
4. *Component 4* ***–*** Contingent Emergency Response. This component will provide immediate response to an Eligible Crisis or Emergency, as needed, in case a natural or man-made disaster or emergency arises.

The Ministry of Education and Research (MoER) would be responsible for overall Project implementation, while the National Office for Regional and Local Development (NORLD) would implement activities related to civil works.

In this context, a Project Coordinator will be hired to assist and provide technical support to the MoER for overall successful implementation of the Project and as well as monitor and evaluate its impact.

1. **OBJECTIVE OF THE CONSULTANCY**

The main role of the SG Officer is to support the MoER in managing the implementation of SG activities under Component 1.3. He/she is responsible for supervising all SG activities from financial management, procurement, social and environmental perspective in collaboration with the relevant EQIP specialists.

The SG Officer participates in review and evaluation of SG proposals, and is responsible for monitoring of sub-projects 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 MoER – mainly the Preuniversity Department - in charge of implementing SG activities financed by the Project, as well as with SG beneficiaries.

1. **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 guide the SG program and will be used along the project life cycle:

* Project Appraisal Document;
* GPE Grant Agreement;
* GPE Grant Disbursement Letter;
* Procurement Regulations for Investment Project Financing (IPF) 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.

Core responsibilities:

* Support the development and finalization of the SG Operations Manual (SGOM) including SG program call for proposals, application package including application template, proposals assessment grid, communication materials for the SG program release cycles;
* Prepare the SG work plan for 2024-2027 for approval by the MoER;
* Prepare the SG Annual Operational Plan (every year) for approval by the MoER;
* Support the launch of the SG program;
* Review grant applications and prepare documents for the MoER’s SG selection committee to conduct selection of SG beneficiaries;
* Manage and update SG database covering submitted applications, selection process results, progress for approved grants and grants achievements including in line with EQIP results framework requirements;
* Ensure day-to-day management of SG program implementation, including development plans and timelines, staff communication, documentation and SG database, training for program beneficiaries, release cycles, M&E and reporting on SG program implementation;
* Coordinate the development of the SG Procurement Plan (every year);
* Monitor and document the SG workflow processes, forms, templates, reports and data to ensure full compliance with internal controls, fiduciary, technical, E&S and legal requirements (jointly with MoER and PMT staff);
* Conduct regular (monthly) sessions with the PMT to review progress;
* Generate reports on progress and achievements of the SG program for PMT, MoER leadership and the World Bank;
* Work with finance to generate reporting required for compliance and audits;
* Ensure accurate and adequate paper and electronic document retention on SG program;
  + Review incoming reports against predicted spend and assess whether the implementation progress is on time and on budget.

Execution and Monitoring Phase:

* SG Officer with support of PMT will be responsible for fiduciary monitoring with regard to grants implementation: (i) ensuring that formal processes of procurement is functioning according to the National and World Bank rules; (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 SG following the SGOM;
* Supervise and monitor the implementation of the SG working plan for 2024-2027;
* Supervise and monitor the implementation of the SG Annual Operational Plan;
* Supervise and monitor the implementation of the SG Procurement Plans;
* Keep track the progress of the SG indicators and report to the Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist;
* Participate in technical and operational meetings required by Project Coordinator;
* Participate in meeting with Bank representatives during supervision missions required by the project Coordinator;
* Prepare project reports related to the SG subcomponent and other activities described in the SGOM;
* Ensure that key information is regularly collected and tracked including in line with the EQIP results framework for project to measure the progress towards its development objectives;
* Ensure that records are maintained of all applications, approvals and claims as defined in the SGOM; Provide support to SG beneficiaries in preparation of their application forms according the SGOM;
* Supervise, in collaboration with other PMT and MoER representatives, the implementation of the approved SG ;
* Support the Project Coordinator in other activities defined in the SGOM;
* Respond promptly to requests on SG program, jointly with PMT;
* Evaluate the operation and performance of the SGOM and propose any changes or additions required to ensure attainment of the SG and EQIP development objectives;
* Ensure continuous learning and improvement of SG program releases within the implementation timeframe;
* Ensure that all accounting procedures and internal controls related to SG subcomponent, are adequately documented;
* Ensure timely and complete records are maintained of all applications, approvals, request for payments and payments;

Closing

* Organize and archive all information collected during the Project life cycle according the Project Operational Manual and the SGOM relevant to SG subcomponent;
* Ensure that all consultancy products and services hired under the project are delivered before the closing date of the GPE Grant;
* Ensure that all the SG indicators are achieved;
* Support the Project Coordinator in organizing a final dissemination event to show the results and impact achieved by the SG subcomponent; and
* Support the preparation of the surveys of beneficiaries and ICR for the SG subcomponent of EQIP.

1. **DURATION**

This is a full-time assignment expected to begin in February 2024. The contract will be signed for a period of 12 months. Subject to Consultant’s satisfactory performance, the contract may be renewed until the Global Partnership for Education Closing Date on December 31, 2027.

1. **CONSULTANT’S REPORTING OBLIGATIONS**

The consultant to be hired in accordance with the proposed assignment should prepare monthly reports on all activities performed. The consultant will report directly to EQIP PED.

The MoER 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.

1. **QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS AND BASIS FOR EVALUATION (EVALUATION CRITERIA)**

The Consultant should meet the following qualifications:

* + University degree in economics, public administration or related field;
  + Experience of budget management, SG management; procurement management;
  + Experience or knowledge of monitoring, evaluation and learning approaches;
  + Excellent financial management skills;
  + Good knowledge of the education sector of Moldova and their needs with experience in implementing tools and/or programs to support education sector or other relevant sector in Moldova;
  + Knowledge of the World Bank procurement procedures would be an asset;
  + Prior experience of working in the field of grant management and monitoring will be considered an advantage;
  + Previous experience of work with the WB or other development partners - supported projects would be an advantage;
  + Proven experience of work with national authorities, program/project and grants programs implementation or other relevant fields is an advantage;
  + Strong communication and teamwork skills;
  + Excellent command of written and spoken Romanian and English languages;
  + Computer proficiency (Windows, MS Office, Internet Explorer).

1. **CONFIDENTIALLY 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.

At Execution and Monitoring, and closing phases the position would be supplemented with an additional SG Officer. The two SG officers would have shared responsibilities.