

**REPUBLIC OF SERBIA**

**INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE PROJECT**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**PROJECT ASSISTANT**

**I. Background and objective of the project**

**Background Information**

The Government of Serbia and the World Bank have identified skills development and inclusion of vulnerable groups as strategic priorities for their next phase of cooperation, based on a Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD) and Country Partnership Framework between the two partners. In particular, the SCD highlights the importance of building human capital to increase labor productivity and enhance social inclusion through closing education enrollment gaps for low-income and Roma students starting in pre-primary. Quality Early Childhood Education and Care programs play a critical role in laying the necessary foundation for skills development early on and for narrowing the equity gap in education access and performance.

The Inclusive Early Childhood Education and Care project also directly contributes to the goals outlined in the Strategy for the Development of Education in Serbia until 2020 (SED 2020) and to its related Action Plan. This strategy, which was adopted in 2012, defines mechanisms for assuring accessibility, quality, and equity in ECEC and sets clear priorities for: (i) increasing coverage; (ii) enhancing quality of the service delivery and outcomes; (iii) increasing efficiency; and (iv) attaining and maintaining relevance for the overall system. The project will directly support these priorities through its various components.

**Objective**

The objective of the project is to improve access to quality Early Childhood Education and Care, with a focus on children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds for all children ages 0 to 6.5 years. Activities for children ages 3 to 6.5 years will focus on increasing access to inclusive quality preschools (i.e. child-centered and with age-appropriate learning opportunities) while also supporting their transition to the early grades of primary education. Activities for younger children, i.e. from birth onwards will focus on empowering parents and families to support children's holistic development through increased knowledge about the importance of early stimulation at home and access to relevant services in the community.

The Project would be implemented by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD) and would rely on the existing structures of the MoESTD and the Working Group. A Project Management Unit (PMU) will be formed to support the existing structures for managing the Project. The Preschool Education Unit within the MoESTD, and the PMU, would be responsible for the technical implementation of the project activities. In addition,

professionals of the MoESTD (civil servants) in coordination with the Institute for Improvement of Education and the Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation, will facilitate the technical inputs for specific project implementation activities.

The overall fiduciary responsibilities of the proposed Project, procurement, financial management and disbursement issues, would rest on the Central Fiduciary Unit (CFU). The CFU will be housed under the Ministry of Finance (MoF) as per the agreement reached between the MoF and the MoESTD.

## **II. Objective and Scope of the Assignment Required**

The Project Assistant will provide administrative and organizational support to the PMU in the overall “Inclusive Early Childhood Education and Care” Project implementation. He/she will work under the overall guidance of the PMU Director and will interact with employees of PMU, MoESTD and CFU.

### **Detailed Tasks and Responsibility**

Without limiting the generalities of the foregoing, the following are the specific tasks and responsibilities of the Project Assistant:

- Providing administrative and logistic support for efficient day-to-day function of PMU;
- Ensuring clear and, depending of confidentiality, accessible database of all incoming and outgoing documentation for PMU;
- Efficiently organizing, maintaining and safekeeping of PMU files and filing system;
- Participating in preparation of payments;
- Preparing drafts of internal documents relevant for the Project implementation;
- Ensuring translation of small texts from Serbian to English and vice versa, if required;
- Participating in logistical arrangements and preparation of seminars, conferences and trainings related to the Project;
- Organizing PMU meetings;
- Interaction with the MoESTD, other authorities, CFU and the World bank team on the administrative issues of the Project;
- Other tasks related to the Project at the request of the MoESTD official responsible for the Project and/or the PMU Director.

## **III. Reporting obligations**

Project Assistant will work under supervision of and report directly to the PMU Director.

#### **IV. Consultants Qualification**

- At least high school diploma;
- At least 5 years of professional experience in related jobs;
- Knowledge and practice of administrative procedures in public administration (ministries);
- Excellent writing, communication and data manipulation skills;
- Fluency in Serbian and excellent command of English;
- Advanced computer skills, excellent command of Microsoft Office tools (Word, Excel, Power Point);
- Knowledge and practice of administrative procedures of the World Bank related projects is an asset;
- Prior experience working in international projects is an asset.

#### **V. Duration of the assignment:**

The Consultant shall provide full time services for an initial period of one year. He/she will have a probationary period of six (6) months. Subject to satisfactory performance, the contract may be extended for the life of the project, i.e. until December 30, 2022. Expected start of services is beginning of 2018.

#### **VI. Facilities to be provided by the client**

The Consultant will be provided with suitable office space, local phone service, appropriate equipment such as PC, printer as well as business mobile number.

#### **VII. Selection method**

The selection method is Individual Consultant in accordance with the procedures specified in the Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by the World Bank Borrowers, January 2011 (revised July 2014).