REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

(CONSULTING SERVICES – FIRMS SELECTION)

**Republic of Serbia**

**Inclusive Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)**

**Project ID No. P157117**

**Assignment Title:**

**PERFORMANCE AND OPERATIONAL AUDIT FOR THE GRANT PROGRAM**

**FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF QUALITY ECEC SERVICES,**

**Reference No. SER-ECEC-8693YF-CQ-CS-19-52**

The Republic of Serbia has received financing in the amount of US$ 50,000,000 equivalent from the World Bank toward the cost of the Inclusive Early Childhood Education and Care Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services.

The objective of the assignment is to complete the performance and operational audit of the implemented grant projects during the overall period of the implementation of the Grant program (foreseen to be implemented 2020, 2021 and 2022). More specifically, the Consultant company shall:

• Propose and agree with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD) on the performance/operational audit methodology to be applied and design the respective tools for its implementation; The consultant must use several qualitative and quantitative techniques to complete the work including review of documents and processes, field visits, direct observation, individual interviews, focus groups etc. This audit will be used to appraise the implementation of the grant program against its design.

• Propose the sample size and sampling strategy for selection of municipalities that were included and received services under each grant measure.

• Review the processes and appraise the implementation of the grant program against its design as defined in the Operational Manual for the program including but not limited to assessment of the:

 - process of dissemination of the information for the Grant program and suggest the areas that need to be adjusted/improved;

 - application process and its compliance with the procedures established in the Operational Manual;

 - overall contract management processes including provision of the activities anticipated in the grant agreement, financial management procedures, procurement management procedures, reporting obligations and monitoring and evaluation practices and suggest the areas/processes that need to be adjusted/improved;

 - process of enhancement of ECEC services on the local level, within all 4 areas of interventions.

• Analyze if there are significant differences between the agreed activities defined in the grant contract, reported activities that were executed by the municipality and the actual services received by the beneficiaries (parents and children).

• Analyze if there are significant differences between the allocated funds per activities as per grant contracts and the actual payments of the activities in order to verify that the agreed activities comply with the actual provided services and respective payments.

• If differences exist, suggest their causes, and propose corrective measures. In order to do so, some complementary qualitative research has to be completed.

The Consulting firm will work together with the ECEC staff on the methodology design. The consultant will work under the overall guidance of the ECEC Project Director. The consultant will work closely with the Coordinator for the Grant program.

The consultancy is to be performed twice during the lifetime of the Grant program i.e. approximately September 2020. and September 2021. The Contract is expected to be signed in April 2020.

The detailed Terms of Reference (ToR) and Request for Expressions of Interest (REoI) for the above referenced consulting services are posted on the website of the MoESTD at <https://ecec.mpn.gov.rs/>

The Central Fiduciary Unit (CFU) of the Ministry of Finance now invites eligible consulting firms (“Consultants”) to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services.

The requested qualifications of the Consulting Firm are the following:

• Minimum 5 years of experience carrying out field research, quantitative and qualitative assessments and process evaluations;

• Proven Experience (at least two assignments) in inclusive educational programs/in implementation of project or services related to inclusive education programs and educational inclusion of vulnerable groups;

• At least two assignments that included grant program evaluation tasks during the last 10 years;

• Strong capacity in data management related to education sector;

• Strong experience working with the following software: CS-Pro or SPSS or Stata;

The requested Experience and Qualifications of Consultant’s Staff are:

I. Team Leader:

• University degree (advanced degree would be an asset);

• Demonstrated ability to provide intellectual leadership, to assist in providing direction to complex policy and institutional development work, outstanding organization skills, including having experience in managing large projects including several participants;

• At least five years of experience in managing teams, supervising and coordinating all technical aspects of a contract. Experience in execution of performance audit would be considered as an advantage;

• Experience in evaluation of public policy programs;

• Excellent knowledge of monitoring and evaluation techniques. This can be confirmed by possession of relevant internationally recognized certificates;

• Well-developed interpersonal (proven client/people skills), mediation and team leadership skills as well as demonstrated capacity to function as a member of a multi-disciplinary team;

• Excellent drafting and reporting skills;

• Knowledge of Serbian will be an advantage.

• Excellent knowledge of English language.

II. Financial Expert:

• At least university degree in public finance, economy, or business administration in accounting, auditing or finance;

• Familiarity with the World Bank Accounting and Auditing ROSCs and how their recommendations are to be translated into action-oriented strategies, underpinned by time-bound action plans to be operationalized through project design and implementation will be considered an advantage;

• In-depth knowledge of International Financial Reporting Standards, International Standards on Auditing;

• Excellent knowledge of public finance, budget and treasury system of Serbia;

• Experience in work with administration budget and finance;

• Well-developed interpersonal, mediation and team leadership skills as well as demonstrated capacity to function as a member of a multi-disciplinary team;

• Excellent drafting and reporting skills;

• Knowledge of Serbian will be an advantage;

• Excellent knowledge of English language.

III. Organizational Expert:

• At least university degree in Social Sciences;

• Proven successful expertise in Organizational Development;

• Awareness of the government policy issues in general and the policy issues facing the education sector;

• Proven experience in implementing functional analysis in public administration bodies (preferably in social and education);

• Well-developed interpersonal, mediation and team leadership skills as well as demonstrated capacity to function as a member of a multi-disciplinary team;

• Excellent knowledge of the English language; Knowledge of Serbian will be an advantage;

• Previous experience in working on WB funded projects will be considered an advantage.

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| *#* | *Criteria* | *Weight* |
| 1 | Core business and general qualifications of the consultant | **30** |
| 2 | Qualifications and specific experience of the consultant related to the assignment | **50** |
| 3 | Organization of the firm, general qualifications and availability of key staff | **20** |

Expressions of Interest should contain following information: (1) profile of the firm; (2) CVs of team members that would work on above mentioned assignment; (3) information on experience in similar assignments and supportive material indicating qualification and competence of the firm to perform the services (portfolio, description of similar asssignments etc.).

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to paragraph 1.9 of the ***World Bank’s* *Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants [under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants] by World Bank Borrowers*, January 2011 (Revised July 2014) (“Consultant Guidelines”)**, setting forth the World Bank’s policy on conflict of interest.

Consultants may associate with other firms to enhance their qualifications, but should indicate clearly whether the association is in the form of a joint venture and/or a sub-consultancy. In the case of a joint venture, all the partners in the joint venture shall be jointly and severally liable for the entire contract, if selected.

A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the *Selection Based on the Consultants’ Qualifications (CQS)* method as set out in the Section III of the Consultant Guidelines.

Further information can be obtained from the CFU at the address below from 09:00 to 15:00 hours.

Expressions of interest in English language must be sent in a written form to the **E-mail** address below, by **March 30, 2020, 12:00 hours, noon**, local time.

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