**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**IMPROVING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATION SYSTEM PRACTITIONERS**

**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 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 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 is implemented by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD) and is relying on the existing structures of the MoESTD and the Working Group. A Project Management Unit (PMU) is being 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, rest on the Central Fiduciary Unit (CFU). The CFU is 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 ECEC Project Sub-Component 2.2.b aims at improving the system of preschool practitioners’ professional development. It focuses on various activities of evaluating, reforming and harmonizing the professional development of preschool teachers and expert associates, improving the content and the relevance of training, securing the quality training service providers and improving the criteria and methodology for career promotion in the preschool system.

The Rule Book on Continuous Professional Development and Career Promotion of School Teachers, Preschool Teachers and Expert Associates stipulates the forms of professional development of preschool and school teachers and expert associates, priority areas in professional development, programmes and the method of its organisation and other matters of importance for the development of the continuous professional development system (the Rule Book on Amendments and Addenda to the Rule Book on Continuous Professional Development and Career Promotion of School Teachers, Preschool Teachers and Expert Associates – The Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 48/18).

Professional development should include the development of practitioners’ competencies by means of critical reflective practice, action research of practices, and monitoring and accordingly introduction of changes in kindergartens This would include development of an ability to work in different communities and with different actors, as well as learning alongside children and parents, permanent access to the recent scientific achievements in the area of preschool education , pedagogy and psychology and doing research with colleagues so as to better understand and change the education/ teaching practice. Professionalism is being developed as a “cognizant social movement” of practitioners, decision makers, scientific, research and education institutions, civil sector and others that contribute to the realization of such concept (Krnjaja and Pavlović Breneselović, 2013.[[1]](#footnote-1). In such context, the community of practitioners is built and developed through internal cooperation, networking the participants, assuming responsibilities and sharing power. Participants in the community of practitioners share common values and objectives, they are focused on learning, raising relevant issues and changing practice through continuous reflection and collaboration. The community of practitioners promotes cooperation, proactivity, joint activity, creation of common understanding for effective practices as well as promotes different levels and means of participation in changing the practices. Such an approach contributes to the well-being of all the practitioners in the preschool system.

In September 2018 the Rule Book on Preschool Curriculum Framework (PCF) was adopted. By the end of 2022, all public preschool institutions in Serbia will have to go through a six-month support scheme to the implementation of the PCF. Implementation of the new curricular concept calls for the change in attitudes and values, changes at the level of culture and structure of a kindergarten and the whole preschool institution. It entails a complex system of relationship building and respecting contextual framework and cannot be reduced to the application of theoretical knowledge on the prescribed Curriculum Framework, but calls for constant revision of theory, practice and personal starting points in a given context of a preschool institution. In that respect professional development organized by the institution presents a fundamental link in building quality practice on the basis of the new PCF.

In order to secure preconditions for developing quality practice in line with the PCF, it is necessary to improve the professional development organized by a preschool institution.

One of the professional development segments that needs attention at this moment is improving digital competencies of preschool teachers.

In line with the Education Development Strategy in the Republic of Serbia by 2020, which recognizes the importance and role of digital technology in improving the education system, as well as in accordance with the Communication 1 from the European Commission: School Development and Excellent Teaching for a Great Start in Life from the year 2017, stressing the need for developing new ways of teaching and learning in an increasingly mobile and digital world, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD) has issued the Digital Competencies Framework – Teacher in Digital Era 2019. By applying this framework, teachers indirectly contribute to the development of digital competencies of students for life and work in a digital society.

Preschool education is an integral part of the education system in the Republic of Serbia. Law on the Foundation of the Education System stipulates seven key educational competencies for life-long learning in line with the international educational policy documents. Being the first level in the education system, preschool education forms the basis for developing such competencies and so provides the continuity of education and life-long learning. One of the seven competencies is digital competency, which at the preschool level develops through meaningful use of digital technology as tools that enable children to get the information, express and present themselves as a part of play and research, and document different activities and processes.

By possessing and improving digital competencies, a preschool teacher is able to apply and integrate new technologies in direct educational work in planning, observing, assessing and documenting this process, so as to develop a programme and make digital technologies serve its purpose in child learning, research and activities, and to use them for his/her own professional development. Developed culture of using digital technologies for programme development enables among other things that preschool teachers and children jointly develop a programme directed towards acquiring key competencies (of children) for life-long learning – different types of early literacy, learning dispositions and digital competencies.

In order to improve the professional development of preschool teachers in this area, the necessary precondition is to develop the Framework of Digital Competencies of Preschool Teachers, the integral part of which is the Concept of Applying Digital Technologies in Preschool Institutions.

**III. Detailed Tasks and Responsibility**

The activities should enable:

1. The creation of the Guide for the Improvement of Professional Development in Preschool Institutions, which would contain recommendations for the improvement of professional development organized by preschool institutions so as to meet the needs of practitioners and at the same time contribute to the improvement of the quality of preschool services offered in preschool institutions in line with the strategic commitment of MoESTD.
2. The preparation of Preschool Teachers’ Digital Competencies Framework, comprising the Concept of Applying Digital Technologies in Preschool Institutions as a guideline for the improvement of the quality of professional development in the area of developing digital/IT competencies, for planning the professional development in such domain and for the development of digital competencies.

The Guide for the Improvement of Professional Development in Preschool Institutions, the Concept of Applying Digital Technologies in Preschool Institutions, and the Digital Competencies Framework must be in accordance with the Law on the Foundation of the Education System, the Rule Book on the Standards of Competencies for Preschool Teachers and Their Professional Development, the Rule Book on Preschool Curriculum Framework, as well as the Rule Book on Preschools Quality Standards.

The purpose of these activities is also to provide support to the MoESTD and the Institute for the Improvement of Education (IIE) in improving the quality in the preschool system through the advancement of preschool practitioners’ professional development.

All the products of the consulting firm (Consultant) will be verified by IIE and approved by MoESTD.

The Consultant is to deliver the following tasks:

**TASK 1: Development of the Implementation Methodology and the Work Plan**

The consultant shall:

* Prepare draft implementation methodology and Work Plan
* Realize consultation process with all relevant stakeholders and revise methodology and plan accordingly - In cooperation with MoESTD and IIE, selecting and appointing members of a reference group with the view to providing opinion and guidelines for the improvement of draft documents prepared by the Consultant in line with ToR;
* Preparation of an Inception Report (containing the Work Plan).

**Output:**

* The Inception Report;

Within 30 (thirty) calendar days from the day of Contract signing, the Consultant submits to IIE and MoESTD for their approval and no objection the Work Plan for the project, specifying milestones and objectives.

**Task 2: Preparing the Guide for the Improvement of Professional Development in Preschool Institutions**

**Activity 2.1. Preparing the methodology for research on preschool practices and the needs of practitioners in organising professional development in preschool institutions**

It includes the following activities of the Consultant:

* Preparing the road map for research (the research is to include all public PIs);
* Preparing a questionnaire for public PI including the analysis of current PI practice in organising professional development;
* Preparing the online version of the questionnaire – the application;
* Defining parameters for forming the purposive sample for interviews and focus groups within the research;
* Identifying key informants for interviews. The Consultant is to consult MoESTD and IIE so as to select the best informants for interviews;
* Developing tools (guided interviews, focus group scenarios) for collecting quantitative and qualitative data on professional development organised in preschool institutions (sampled);
* Developing forms/protocols for the analysis of PI professional development documents;
* Preparing templates for the focus group reports.

**Deliverable 2.1:**

* Research methodology prepared for PI practice research and the needs of practitioners in organising professional development in PIs.

Within 60 (sixty) calendar days from the day of Contract signing, the Consultant submits to IIE and MoESTD for their approval the Deliverable 2.1.

**Activity 2.2. Researching the practice of organizing PI staff professional development in other countries**

It involves:

* Desk analysis of experience in professional development of practitioners organized by PIs from five other countries at the most (please select countries with the similar curriculum framework to the one in Serbia or high-quality/inspirational practice in organising professional development of practitioners inside the preschool system);
* Describing the form of professional development applied in the selected countries;
* Recommendations of useful points for Serbian PIs.

**Deliverable 2.2:**

* Presentation prepared of professional development practices in PIs from other countries, with recommendations to the Serbian system.

Within 90 (ninety) calendar days from the day of Contract signing, the Consultant submits to IIE and MoESTD for their approval the Deliverable 2.2.

**Activity 2.3. Conducting research on the needs of practitioners and their professional development organized by PIs**

It includes the following activities of the Consultant:

* Gathering data, by means of an electronic questionnaire, on the needs of practitioners and their professional development in a PI in all public PIs on the territory of the Republic of Serbia;
* Processing collected data on the practices of PIs in organizing professional development;
* Defining a sample of PIs – purposive sample comprising PIs which are perceived, through their answers to the questionnaire, as good organisers of professional development in line with the needs of the practice;
* Based on the given methodology, logistically prepares and forms four focus groups of representatives from the sampled PIs on the practice of organizing professional development in a PI;
* Preparing focus groups reports;
* Collects good practice examples of professional development from the sampled PIs.

**Deliverables 2.3:**

* Report that includes: gathered and processed data from all public PIs by means of given methodology; focus groups reports prepared; good practice examples collected.

Within 120 (one hundred and twenty) calendar days from the day of Contract signing, the Consultant submits to IIE and MoESTD for their approval the Deliverables 2.3.

**Activity 2.4. Preparing the final report on the results of research**

The report is to comprise the description of the methodology used, the research results, the analysis and interpretation of the data collected from PI documents, the questionnaire and focus group reports, as well as recommendations for improving the professional development organized by PIs in the context of the relevant preschool policy documents (PCF, Standards of Competencies for Preschool Teachers and Their Professional Development, Preschools Quality Standards...).

It includes the following activities of the Consultant:

* Structuring the content of the final report,
* Drafting final report and submitting it to IIE and MoESTD for comments,
* Preparing the final report.

**Deliverable 2.4:**

* Final report prepared on the practices of PIs and the needs of practitioners in organizing their professional development in PIs.

Within 150 (one hundred and fifty) calendar days from the day of Contract signing, the Consultant submits to IIE and MoESTD for their approval the Deliverable 2.4.

**Activity 2.5. Guide for the Improvement of Professional Development in Preschool Institutions (suggested methodology and tools)**

In carrying out the assigned task, the Consultant will be oriented towards developing reflective practice of preschool teachers and building quality, based on the research results and the current laws and regulations in this domain (PCF, Standards of Competencies for Preschool Teachers and Their Professional Development, Preschools Quality Standards...), and will closely cooperate with other consultants hired for the Project, as well as the IIE and MoESTD representatives. The planned activities will enable synchronising and synergising with the relevant activities carried out through other project initiatives in ECEC supported/implemented by MoESTD.

It includes the following activities of the Consultant:

* Recommending different forms of professional development of practitioners realized in a PI;
* Preparing draft methodology for supporting development and improving reflective practice and learning community, and developing a role of “a critical friend” among the preschool staff through the implementation of the said forms of professional development;
* Based on the proposed methodology, recommending and pointing out examples of tools for supporting the development and improvement of reflective practice, learning community (or recommends the use of methodology and tools resulting from other project initiatives);
* Analysing collected examples of good practice in organizing professional development in PIs, selecting the best examples and incorporating them into the Guide for the Improvement of Professional Development in Preschool Institutions.

**Deliverable 2.5:**

* Guide for the Improvement of Professional Development in Preschool Institutions prepared.

Within 240 (two hundred and forty) calendar days from the day of Contract signing, the Consultant submits to IIE and MoESTD for their approval the Deliverable 2.5.

**Activity 2.6. Proofreading and preparing texts for publishing online**

**Deliverable 2.6:**

* Texts proofread and prepared for publishing online.

Within 270 (two hundred and seventy) calendar days from the day of Contract signing, the Consultant submits to IIE and MoESTD for their approval the Deliverable 2.6.

**Task 3: Creating preconditions for improving digital competencies of practitioners in preschool institutions**

**Activity 3.1. Preparing the approach to / the concept of using digital technology in preschool institutions**

It includes the following activities of the Consultant:

* Performing desk analysis and preparing review of relevant scientific papers on developing digital competencies at preschool age and using digital technology in PIs;
* Preparing the approach to / the concept of using digital technology in PIs;
* Consultationprocesswiththe relevant partners (MoESTD, IPA, IIE, IEQE, UNICEF…) on the prepared approach/concept;
* Preparing the final proposal of the approach to / the concept of using digital technologies in PIs.

**Deliverable 3.1:**

* The approach to / the concept of using digital technology in preschool institutions prepared.

Within 90 (ninety) calendar days from the day of Contract signing, the Consultant submits to IIE and MoESTD for their approval the Deliverable 3.1.

**Activity 3.2. Preparing the Draft Preschool Teachers’ Digital Competencies Framework**

It includes the following activities of the Consultant:

* Preparing the Draft Preschool Teachers’ Digital Competencies Framework;
* Sending it for review to the reference group members;
* Revising the Draft Preschool Teachers’ Digital Competencies Framework in line with the guidelines and comments of the reference group.

**Deliverables 3.2:**

* Draft Preschool Teachers’ Digital Competencies Framework prepared;
* Comments of the reference group members collected and the document revised in line with the received comments.

Within 150 (one hundred and fifty) calendar days from the day of approving the Work plan for the Project, the Consultant submits to MoESTD for their approval the Deliverables 3.2.

**Activity 3.3. Verifying the document by IIE**

It includes the following activities of the Consultant:

* Submitting the revised Preschool Teachers’ Digital Competencies Framework document to IIE for verification;
* Preparing the corrected document in line with the possible comments made by IIE.

**Deliverable 3.3:**

* Draft Preschool Teachers’ Digital Competencies Framework verified by IIE.

Within 180 (one hundred and eighty) calendar days from the day of the Project Work Plan approval, the Consultant delivers to MoESTD the deliverables 3.3.

**Activity 3.4. Submitting the document to MoESTD for approval**

* Preparatory activities for submitting the Preschool Teachers’ Digital Competencies Framework document, verified by IIE, to MoESTD for approval;
* Preparatory activities for publishing the Preschool Teachers’ Digital Competencies Framework document on the MoESTD’s and IIE’s web-site.

**Deliverable 3.4:**

* The document Preschool Teachers’ Digital Competencies Framework approved by MoESTD.

Within 190 (one hundred and ninety) calendar days from the day of the Project Work Plan approval, the Consultant delivers to MoESTD the Deliverable 3.4.

**Activity 3.5. Proofreading and preparing text for publishing online**

**Deliverable 3.5:**

* The text proofread and prepared for publishing online.

Within 200 (two hundred) calendar days from the day of the Project Work Plan approval, the Consultant submits to MoESTD for their approval the Deliverable 3.5.

**IV. Reporting obligations**

The Consultant and the PIU will organize periodic meetings within the agreed time frame, or more frequently should the need arise, in order to secure the successful cooperation. The activities will be carried out according to the quarterly Work Plan subject to the approved of the Component 2 Coordinator and PIU Director within MoESTD. The quality of work will be assessed by Component 2 Coordinator and approved by PIU Director. The Consultant shall submit periodic and annual progress reports to MoESTD and PIU.

**V. Consultant’s Qualification**

* The Consultant/Firm shall be registered as a legal entity;
* The Consultant/Firm shall have appropriate professional, organizational and logistical capacities necessary for carrying out the assignment;
* At least five years of experience in carrying out the activities on improving the education quality in the Republic of Serbia and/or other counties in the region ;
* Experience in at least three projects dealing with the improvement of the education quality in the Republic of Serbia implemented in the last five years;
* The Consultant/Firm shall be capable of providing 2 key experts:

K1: Team leader and senior expert associate for preschool education, with the following qualifications and experience:

* University degree in Pedagogy, Psychology, or other fields of Education, Social Studies and Humanities;
* At least 5 years of relevant professional experience involving education policies and practices in Serbia;
* Experience in dealing with the issues of professional development and career promotion is preferable;
* Comprehensive knowledge of Preschool Curriculum Framework is preferred;
* Comprehensive knowledge of education policy and main initiatives in preschool education is desirable;
* Knowledge of regulatory framework in education, focusing on preschool education, is preferable;
* Possessing a professional development certificate in the area close to the one described in ToR is a plus;
* Excellent oral and written Serbian language skills and good command of English.

K2: Senior expert associate for preschool education, with the following qualifications and experience:

* At least 5 years of relevant professional experience involving education policies and practices in Serbia;
* Experience in application of digital technologies in working with children in a education;
* Experience in application of digital technologies in working with children in a PI is a plus;
* Participation in projects aimed at developing digital competencies of educational staff is considered an advantage
* Comprehensive knowledge of Preschool Curriculum Framework is preferred;
* Comprehensive knowledge of education policy and main initiatives in preschool education is desirable;
* Knowledge of regulatory framework in education, focusing on preschool education, is preferable;
* Possessing a professional development certificate in the area close to the one described in ToR is a plus;
* Excellent oral and written Serbian language skills and good command of English.

Alongside the letter of interest, the Consultant is required to submit the key expert’s CV.

Following the evaluation of the received letters of interest, the Consultant/Firm with the highest score in the evaluation will be asked to submit their technical and financial proposal.

**VII. Selection method**

The selection method is the Selection Based on the Consultants’ Qualifications (CQS) 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).

**VII. Terms of Payment**

The Contract will be the Standard World Bank Lump Sum Contract. The payment shall be based on deliverables/reports approved by the Project Component 2 Coordinator and PIU Director. The Contract costs will include remuneration and reimbursable costs referring to the assignment.

**VIII. Conflict of Interest**

The engaged Consultant must not be involved in any other activities related to this Project.

1. Perspektiva vaspitača o profesionalnom usavršavanju sa stanovišta sistemske koncepcije profesionalnog razvoja: [file:///C:/Users/Biki/Downloads/AS\_2012-1\_09%20(3).pdf](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CBiki%5CDownloads%5CAS_2012-1_09%20%283%29.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)