**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**ASSOCIATE FOR HORIZONTAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN PRESCHOOL PRACTITIONERS**

**(PART-TIME POSITION)**

1. **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 (ECEC) 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 2030 (SED 2030) and to its related Action Plan. This strategy 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) with the support of Project Management Unit (PMU).

The overall fiduciary responsibilities of the 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.

1. **Objective and Scope of the Assignment Required**

In addition to providing trainings for various groups of practitioners, developing guidebooks and manuals, and providing mentoring support to preschool institutions (PIs), the implementation of the Preschool Curriculum Framework (PCF) also involves supporting the development of competencies of preschool practitioners by means of two methods of horizontal exchange between practitioners: the exchange with kindergartens acting as centres of clusters – the Modeling Learning Community model (MLC), and the exchange with peers – practitioners in the same phase of the new PCF implementation – the Professional Learning Community model (PLC).

1. MLC model includes single-day accredited professional meetings in kindergartens acting as centres of clusters (Zemun, Novi Sad, Čačak, Loznica and Pirot). The participants of these meetings are practitioners from different preschool institutions (PIs) that territorially gravitate towards a kindergarten acting as a cluster centre. It is envisaged that by the end of the ECEC Project implementation all PIs established by the Republic of Serbia, the autonomous province or a local self-government receive this kind of support. Single-day professional meeting (SDPM) is an event planned for up to 30 practitioners from one or more PIs, paired according to the PCF implementation phase they are in and/or the feedback received by their mentors on the process of the PCF implementation and the introduction of change. The content of the professional meeting is modeled on and prepared in line with the specific needs for the support of each PI sending its practitioners to the meeting.

2. PLC model is to be introduced in several stages: 1) training horizontal exchange coordinators from all the kindergartens acting as nuclei of change; 2) planning the horizontal exchange events (pairing participants / kindergartens acting as nuclei of change based on the information/report received from mentors; 3) professional meetings in kindergartens (collecting material for the realization of horizontal exchange events, reflective approach to the practice of preschool teachers in kindergartens acting as nuclei of change by means of the PLC methodology and the preparation of different kinds of material on the selected topics; 4) professional meetings of expert associates and teachers from different PIs: accredited professional meetings attended by the practitioners from six different PIs acting as nuclei of change, paired on the basis of the feedback received from their mentors (in three sessions, these meetings would comprise reflective activities, exchange, deliberation and defining changes through personal insights and based on feedback received by colleagues from other PIs; 5) the change of practice in action following the horizontal exchange events.

The Consultant is to prepare and hold horizontal exchange SDPMs for colleagues equal in the education level and position according to the training programmes under the MLC and PLC models developed under the Inclusive Early Childhood Education and Care project.

**Detailed Tasks and Responsibilities**

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

- Upon the request of the Component 2 Coordinator, operative and technical communication with UNICEF on the one hand and the participants and PIs on the other hand regarding the organization of the meeting, in order to harmonise all the details of the organization and the actual conduct of the meeting in line with the dynamic plan of the Project;

- Forming groups of up to 35 participants from 6 or 7 kindergartens acting as nuclei of change from different PIs which have implemented PLC model during the year, and/or forming groups of up to 30 participants from at least three PIs for attending training according to the MLC model (visit to the centre of cluster). The Consultant shall communicate with PIs regarding the participation of their representatives in the meeting;

- Following the application procedure of the Institute for the Improvement of Education for the realisation of horizontal exchange professional meetings according to PLC and MLC models;

- Preparing the request for the organisation of individual events i.e. meetings and submitting them to the agency hired under the Project for the organization of trainings, seminars, workshops, study and other types of travels. The request is to be prepared according to predetermined procedure known to the Consultant beforehand;

- Preparation of reports on each meeting in the format developed under the ECEC Project;

- Recording data on the meetings held and their participants in the manner determined by the Component 2 Coordinator, and collecting and submitting generic data to the Component 2 Coordinator upon the Coordinator’s request;

- Providing necessary documents and information for the preparation and the execution of payments and submitting them to the agency hired under the Project for the organisation of trainings, seminars, workshops, study and other types of travels, to the Financial Associate under the ECEC Project, to CFU, and to the appointed MoESTD employees;

- Performing other tasks at the request of the Component 2 Coordinator and the PMU Director.

The maximum number of work days of the Consultant is 2 (two) work days per a horizontal exchange professional meeting.

1. **Reporting obligations**

The Consultant shall work under the supervision of and report directly to the Component 2 Coordinator and PMU Director.

1. **Consultant’s Qualifications**

* University degree in pedagogy, psychology, or education – Diploma of a teacher education faculty – preschool teacher training department or a preschool teacher training college;
* At least 2 (two) years of relevant professional experience in a preschool institution or in working on organisational and administrative tasks;
* Knowledge of the Preschool Curriculum Framework Rule Book shall be considered an advantage;
* Familiarity with the accounting documentation shall be considered a plus;
* Computer literacy (*MS Word*, *MS Excel*, *MS Project*, *MS* *Power Point*, e-mail, internet);
* Excellent speaking and writing skills in Serbian and good command of the English language.

1. **Duration of the assignment**

The Consultant shall provide part-time services under the lump-sum contract, to be paid upon the presentation of successively submitted documents for each horizontal exchange event separately. The estimated number of work days for the Consultant is up to 100 (one hundred) work days (one work day equals 8 (eight) hours at the most) for the life of the project, i.e. until December 30, 2022. The expected start of services is September 2021.

**VI. Selection method**

The selection method is the 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).