

TERMS OF REFERENCE

GRANT 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 education. 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 2020 (SED 2020) and to its related Action Plan. This strategy, 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 directly supports these priorities through its various components.

Objective

The objective of the project is to improve access to quality Early Childhood Education and Care for all children ages 0 to 6.5 years, with a focus on children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. 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.

II. Objective and Scope of the Assignment Required

Within the component 3: Supporting Young Children and Families, a sub-component 3.2 Outreach to Vulnerable Families provides grants to selected municipalities to improve coordination and cooperation among relevant actors in providing holistic and high quality early childhood education and care to parents and children aged 0 to 6.5 at the local level, with a

focus on the most vulnerable. The activities include health, nutrition, early screening of disabilities and early stimulation and learning areas. As a multi-sectorial program, it links various local government departments and non-government entities to propose different measures and services for inclusive early childhood education and care.

Grants will be awarded to at least 35 municipalities in the amount of up to 40,000 EUR per municipality, based on the scope of the proposed projects, the types of activities proposed and the estimated budget. The procedures and core package of activities are defined in a Grant Operation Manual (GOM).

The Grant Assistant will provide support to the Grant Coordinator in overall implementation of grant funds under the Project.

Detailed Tasks and Responsibilities

Specific responsibilities of the Grant Assistant include, but are not limited to the following:

- Assists the Grant Coordinator in implementation of the grant component;
- Processes financial documentation of the grant beneficiaries;
- Contacts grant beneficiaries, provides instructions for financial management and reporting and assists them to correctly keep financial documentation related to grant proceeds management;
- Processes/preparing necessary documentation for transfer of grant proceeds to grant beneficiaries;
- Maintains accounting records of grant awarded projects (including the systematic filing of all necessary documentation) in excel spreadsheet;
- Verifying eligibility of costs,
- Creates accessible database of all incoming and outgoing financial documentation for the Grants;
- Participates in trainings for Grants beneficiaries regarding issuing grants and auditing uses of funds;
- Participates in preparation of grant-related Project's Reports;
- Liaises with the finance department of the MoESTD and CFU;
- Performs other operational and technical tasks for the Grant Project component required by Grant Coordinator and PMU Director.

III. Reporting obligations

The Grant Assistant will work under supervision of and report directly to the Grant Coordinator and PMU Director.

IV. Consultants Qualification

- At least high school degree; university degree preferred;
- At least five (5) years of experience in administrative/financial field;
- Experience with managing data basis;
- Experience with documentation systematization and archiving;
- Knowledge of local administration structure and procedures;
- Adequate computer skills and knowledge of relevant software packages required;
- Excellent communication, interpersonal and team working skills;

- Excellent presentations skills.

V. Duration of the assignment

The Consultant shall provide full time services for the life of the project, i.e. until December 30, 2022, with a probationary period of six (6) months. Expected start of services is October 2019.

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, etc.

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).