

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Georgia

Project Name: Georgia I2Q - Innovation, Inclusion and Quality

Project No.168481

Assignment Title: Short-Term Consultant (International) for the Preparation of the Full Package of Regulatory Documents for CIF

Contract/RFP No: GE-MESCS-227984-CS-INDV

Georgia has received financing from the World Bank towards the cost of the **Georgia I2Q - Innovation, Inclusion and Quality Project** and intends to apply part of the proceeds to payments for goods, works, and related services and consulting services to be procured under this project.

The Project consists of the following key components:

Component 1- Improving Quality of and Access to Early Childhood Education and Care: support to facilitate expanded access to quality pre-school education in selected pre-schools.

Component 2 – Fostering Quality Teaching and Learning in General Education: Support to provide a learning environment that is conducive to quality education in selected general education schools.

Component 3 – Strengthening Financing Options and Promoting Internationalization in Higher Education: Support to improve the quality and international competitiveness of higher education.

Component 4 – System Strengthening and Stakeholder Communication: Support to facilitate a shift in attitude towards learning.

Component 5 – Supporting Project Management, Monitoring, and Evaluations: Support capacity building for effective management and monitoring of the Project including provision of Operating Costs, Training, outreach and awareness campaigns, consulting services, M & E and, Project audits for (a) Project Management Team (PMT); and (b) Project Management Unit (PMU).

The Project will be implemented over a six-year period by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia (MES) and its subordinate government agencies and by the Municipal Development Fund of Georgia (MDF).

The Project Management Unit (PMU) created within MES supports the implementation of the Project's tasks above. The Project Management Team (PMT) created within MDF supports implementation of the separate component aimed to improve the relevant infrastructure and rehabilitate schools under the Project overall objectives.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia (MES) now invites Individual Consultants (Consultants) to express their interest in providing the following services: Short-Term Consultant (International) for the Preparation of the Full Package of Regulatory Documents for CIF.

General Objective of the Assignment

The project will support the establishment of a Competitive Innovation Fund (CIF) (for public and private universities) under the sub-component 3.2. The CIF will be established as a competitive grant mechanism coordinated by the MES, to award up to 45 CIF grants to foster modernization of higher education programs and learning environment and strengthen the labor market linkages.

The CIF is considered as a funding pool that can be accessed by groups within the university community to carry out new initiatives and innovative approaches to address the existing problems in teaching, learning, integrating research into teaching and learning using technology and modern pedagogical approaches, and supporting development of university management system. More specifically, the funding windows will be for the public universities targeting specific development and innovation issues, and for the consortia projects encouraging cooperation in joint projects uniting the public and private universities. Private companies, research institutions, and foreign companies (non-university institutions) will be also eligible to be involved in the project as consortium participants.

Therefore, the CIF is a tool that enables university units to link their strategic planning with actual prospects for strategic implementation of these plans. This is achieved by ensuring that funding applications are based upon and justified by the university's initial diagnosis of its principal strengths and weaknesses in the context of environmental opportunities and risks. Innovation funds accelerate processes of constructive change and institutional modernization by promoting both cooperation and competition among participating departments, faculties and universities.

Examples of the grants supported include grants focused on the improvement and upgrade of the programs that can include - developing the program content to reflect the latest trends in the field, introducing innovations in terms of teaching and learning including support for classroom teaching utilizing technology and modern pedagogical approach, such as problem-solving and project-based learning, and improvement of e-learning methods, engaging relevant employers to reinforce the linkages with labor market, modernizing and upgrading labs and physical infrastructure to meet the program objectives. It can also envisage the improvement of gender imbalances in the education system, especially in STEM subjects. Under this sub-component, the project would support HEIs to attract female students to STEM programs and help narrow the gender gap in STEM fields.

In their design, CIF will respect university autonomy while encouraging institutions to think holistically about their planning and development. Universities decide for themselves the innovations that they would like to carry out. They select the key academic areas they regard as their greatest assets. They choose the strategic mix of staff development, short-term training, visiting experts, laboratory equipment, computers, technical assistance, etc. that they believe will best allow them to implement successfully their proposed innovation. The process of preparing a funding application encourages institutional self-reflection and staff discussions centered on problem-solving and priorities and requires institutional acceptance as well. In many cases, institutional partnerships and cooperative efforts will increase the possibilities of funding success.

The application for funding should summarize a systematic exercise in which problems are defined and diagnosed; multi-year strategies for their resolution are elaborated; and the goals, performance indicators, human resources, and financial needs are established. The CIF's support is not a reward for excellence previously achieved by the applicants, nor is it a compensation for institutional poverty. Any university unit – whether of excellent, average, or modest-quality – can obtain Innovation Fund resources as long their innovation effort is feasible, and as long as their applications meet the required criteria of quality, relevance, and strategic impact.

To demonstrate the institutional acceptance of the proposal, universities can provide different options for institutional co-financing. The financing of each university's proposal could be shared from several possible sources: The CIF (comprised of the World Bank resources), and/or the Government's contribution, and/or the university system's agreed participation share, and/or the private sector contribution/co-financing, etc.

The main regulatory framework governing the CIF should be the Operational Manual (OM). The OM for Competitive Innovation Fund will define the organizational structure of CIF, main principles and objectives, implementation mechanisms, functions, and procedures. The OM for CIF will be submitted to the Bank for review and acceptance and will be approved by the Minister. This allows the CIF to be consistent with the national development plans, public policies, and their implementation. This activity would also facilitate the development of grants' design.

The decision process for project approval has to be thorough and considered. Funding approval decisions should be based on the following criteria:

- Eligibility of the proposal;
- Quality and relevance of the proposal;
- The proposal's strategic justification in relation to national and institutional priorities;
- Outreach of the proposed activity;
- Financial sustainability of the proposed activity.

Objective evaluation of these funding applications is a critical undertaking. It must be carried out in a fully transparent way in order for subsequent decisions to be credible within the university community. Non-approved applications will not be regarded as failures. Instead, they will be viewed as insufficiently developed. In such cases, the effort that went into preparing the application is recognized, and technical assistance may be requested in order to strengthen the application and increases its chances of success in the next round of awards.

Objective of the assignment

The objective of this assignment is to provide technical support to PMU for the Preparation of the Full Package of Regulatory Documents for CIF.

Scope of Work

The Consultant under this assignment will be responsible for undertaking the following Phases:

Phase I – Preparatory Works

Within the preparatory stage the consultant is expected to undertake necessary actions for facilitating and leading the planning process including but not limited to:

- i. Conduct a desk review - mapping, collecting and evaluating necessary data and resources for developing the CIF implementation strategy and conceptual vision.

Such data can include the project related documents - POM, PAD, relevant statistical data, information on MES strategic priorities for CIF, the functional analysis of the MES's relevant structural units, regulations and legislative framework, relevant analytical and/or progress reports, lessons learned and the best applicable international practices.

- ii. Hold consultations with MES and other key stakeholders to identify and to ensure the better understanding of the strategic objectives and priorities of the Government. Key stakeholders include representatives of the higher education/research institutions, the MES's relevant structural units, the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia (SRNSFG), the Georgia's Innovation and Technology Agency (GITA), etc.

Phase II – Development of the Full Package of Regulatory Documents for CIF

All regulatory acts have to be drafted based on conceptual vision, which should be developed based on the results of Phase I, and in consultation and close cooperation with the Client, PMU, and all relevant stakeholders.

Within the Phase II, the consultant is expected to undertake necessary actions for facilitating and leading the process of developing the full Package of Regulatory Documents for CIF, including but not limited to:

- i. Define the structure of the table of content for OM for CIF, with the descriptions of all included topics and subtopics.

The OM for CIF should address all relevant issues, including but not limited to the following:

- ✓ The aim of the CIF
 - ✓ Detailed implementation plan and principles for implementation of CIF funded grant projects
 - ✓ Description of Funding windows, with its aims
 - ✓ Eligibility and selection criteria
 - ✓ Organizational setup
 - ✓ Operational guidelines and procedures
 - ✓ Proposal Evaluation Criteria
 - ✓ The grievances redress mechanism
 - ✓ Audit procedures
 - ✓ All necessary Forms - Annexes:
 - Proposal Submission Form, with the relevant annexes (forms)
 - Grant Agreement Form, including the financial and narrative report forms
 - The relevant Terms of References, including the ToR for the Audit of the Grant Projects Implemented under the CIF in the frames of the Project
- ii. Allocate tasks regarding the development of the detailed instructions for each topic among the two local consultants hired for the same period, including:
 - a. Setting goals for performance in ways that comply with the already agreed conceptual vision and structure for OM for CIF;
 - b. Supervising the instructions development process for OM for CIF, work performed, and monitoring local consultants' productivity and providing constructive feedback and coaching.
 - iii. Through consultative meetings and in-depth discussions with the Client, define CIF priorities, the objectives for the funding windows, and the methodology for choosing programs for funding;
 - iv. Providing guidance and supporting the development of the regulations, mechanisms, and procedures for the introduction and operation of the CIF;
 - v. Support the dissemination channels to spread the information about the funding; Coordination with the private sector, public, and private HEIs to raise the awareness of the triple helix model of innovation that refers to the importance of connections between academia, industry, and the government to foster academic and social development.
 - vi. Conduct and facilitate focus groups/working group meetings with relevant representatives on project planning and management, evaluation, and monitoring activities of the planned CIF implementation process.

Other Related Tasks

During services the Consultants shall:

- i. Organize the meetings with the Client and other relevant stakeholders as needed to obtain necessary information and data, present and discuss the key aspects and recommendations to formulate a vision and related set of necessary actions;
- ii. Support the work of other local consultants hired under this assignment, provide input for their assignments if necessary, review local consultants' outputs and provide feedback/comments, identify additional research needs, etc.

Interested individuals shall provide information demonstrating that they have the necessary experience to perform the aforesaid services. CVs of the candidates should cover experience in relevant to the project activities.

Required Qualifications

- Advanced degree, preferably in education policy/management, business administration or law;
- Minimum 10 years of working experience in education sector (management, research, policy planning, analysis and/or formulation), including 5 years of international experience;
- Working experience in designing Competitive Funding Systems, developing fundraising strategies and mechanism for Research/Innovation Funds and/or analyzing priorities for the HE/Science/Technology Sector and funding options at the state level;
- Working experience in drafting regulatory frameworks or legislation, and/or developing the policies and documents at the state level, and facilitating their implementation (manuals, handbooks, etc.);
- Demonstrated skills in team-work and effective interaction with senior government officials;
- Excellent report writing skills;
- Proficiency in English Language.

Note: The MES reserves its right to verify submitted references and use obtained information for evaluation purposes.

Duration of Assignment

Lump-sum contract will be signed with successful Consultant for the duration of 5 months. The assignment is expected to commence in June 2021.

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to paragraph 3.14 "Conflict of Interest" of the World Bank's Guidelines: [World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrower, July 2016 revised August 2018"](#), setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest. In addition, please refer to the following specific information on conflict of interest related to this assignment: The consultant shall not receive any remuneration in connection with the assignment except as provided in the contract. The consultant and its affiliates shall not engage in consulting or other activities that conflict with the interest of the client under the contract. The contract shall include provisions limiting future engagement of the consultant for other services resulting from or directly related to the firm's consulting services in accordance with the requirements of paragraphs 3.16, 3.17 and 3.18 of the Guidelines.

An individual consultant will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in World Bank's Guidelines: [World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrower, July 2016 revised August 2018"](#) "Selection of Individual Consultants".

Interested consultants may obtain further information by email: procurement@iiq.gov.ge

Cover letter and CVs of candidates in English language must be submitted electronically, indicating the name of position on the subject to the address below not later than, **May 7, 2021, 17:00 pm local time.**

Name: Ia Iashvili
Position: Procurement Specialist
Address: N52 Dimitri Uznadze str., Tbilisi, 0102, Georgia
Email: procurement@iiq.gov.ge
Web-Site: www.iiq.gov.ge