**Skills Development and Innovation Support Project (SDISP)**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**for**

**Social Specialist**

1. **BACKGROUND**

The Government of Republic of North Macedonia has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development- World Bank for implementing the Skills Development and Innovation Support Project (SDISP). The Project will support interventions which foster education and skills relevant to the job market, and enhance the innovation capacity and activity of firms in North Macedonia. It will also address key missing elements of the North Macedonian innovation system and ailing aspects of the research sector that are likely to be vital for improving the competitiveness of the enterprise sector and North Macedonia’s longer term economic growth prospects. It will also help improve absorption of EU funds earmarked for innovation activities. The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to improve transparency of resource allocation and promote accountability in higher education, enhance the relevance of secondary technical vocational education, and support innovation capacity in North Macedonia.

The Project’s direct beneficiaries include around students, teaching and management staff from technical vocational education and training institutions who would receive a new curriculum and practical training facilities, as well as training on management, planning, and process improvement capacity; students and staff of universities, research institutions and enterprises will benefit from: (i) the implementation of quality assurance mechanisms and financing reform in higher education (HE); (ii) grants promoting R&D and innovation; and (iii) technology commercialization, global know-how absorption, and industry- university collaboration fostered by the National Technology Transfer Office (NTTO).

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education and Science is in its final phase of designing the Primary Education Improvement Project which will focus on three main elements that need to be aligned in order to be complementary to each other. Two are system-level reforms, to do with developing a comprehensive national assessment program and putting into practice professional competences, that would create the necessary enabling conditions, so the school teams are empowered with data on learning and up-to-date training; the third focuses on school-level interventions.

**II. OBJECTIVE OF THE ASSIGNMENT**

The objective is to hire an individual consultant to provide critical inputs for inclusion of vulnerable categories of students in setting up standards and criteria for comprehensive quality assurance system in education.

**III. SPECIFIC TASKS**

The Consultant shall be is responsible for:

* Providing technical support to the Ministry of Education and Science in the process of inclusion of vulnerable categories of students in education policy development and implementation
* Development of quality assurance standards for evaluation and accreditation of education institutions, providing related input regarding the education financing models with the accent of inclusion of vulnerable categories of students
* Assist in all MoES and project related activities with regards to social and inclusion aspects of the education policy development;
* Providing assistance and coordination in the efforts of various stakeholders (NGOs, parents, student unions, etc.) with respect to ensuring their adequate representation and impact in outlining the social component of education policy development;
* Organize meetings and workshops related to inclusion of vulnerable categories in the HE policy development;
* Any other activities related to the implementation of the SDIS project and MOES operation.

1. **REPORTING OBLIGATIONS**

The Consultant shall regularly debrief the Minister of Education and Science and SDIS Project Director on the progress in respect to the contract obligations performed.

**V. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS OF THE CONSULTANT**

The Consultant should have the following experience and qualifications:

* University Degree in social sciences (social policy, political science, or similar);
* At least 7 years of relevant experience in the area of social services development;
* Knowledge of the Macedonian public sector and up to date knowledge of the state of the ongoing and proposed reforms in the Human development sector will be considered as an advantage;
* Excellent verbal and writing communication skills in Macedonian and English.

1. **DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT**

The Consultant will work under a time-based contract. The assignment will be part time, working 10 hours per week in North Macedonia. The contract for this assignment will be until April 30, 2021.