

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS AND CONTRACTORS

International Consultant for Preparing for Joint Sector Review of the Education Sector Plan, Republic of Armenia

Individual Consultant is expected to perform this assignment remotely (home based) with possible field missions as required.

Duty Station: Yerevan, Armenia

Supervisor: Education Specialist

Time-frame: from August 2023 to January 2024

Purpose of Activity/Assignment:

The purpose of the consultancy is to work with and provide assistance to the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (MoESCS) to prepare for the Joint Sector Review (JSR) process of the State Education Development Programme of the Republic of Armenia until 2030 (hereafter referred to as Education Sector Plan). This assignment is to be guided by the 2021-2026 Republic of Armenia Government Program (more specifically, the section on General Education), the Education Sector Plan and the Action Plan adjacent to it, as well as by JSR guidelines of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/practical-guide-effective-joint-sector-reviews-education-sector>. The assignment is within Activity 1.2 (Contribute to the development/establishment of sectoral programme goals, objectives, strategies, and results-based planning through equity focused research, collection, analysis and reporting of education and other related information for development planning and priority and goal setting) under Output 3.1 (National systems and capacities of officials and other stakeholders are strengthened to develop evidence-based policies, plans and budgets, ensuring inclusive and equitable education outcomes for all children) of the Armenia-UNICEF Multi-Year Work Plan 2022-2023 and the GPE Education Sector Plan Development Grant, where UNICEF acts as Grant Agent, supporting the Government and national stakeholders.

With an aim of strengthening, aligning, and making the sector monitoring more comprehensive as well as doing more responsive planning and resource optimization, JSR plays a pivotal and strategic role within national education systems. Through a participative review process, and inclusive sector dialogue, it is a mechanism for the joint review of results, progress, and performance in the implementation of national education sector plans.

An individual international consultant is required to support the MoESCS and its adjacent agencies in best designing and developing the processes and procedures of sectoral performance review over the previous fiscal year, including progress in implementation of the activities envisioned by the Action Plan adjacent to the Education Sector Plan for each fiscal year. The JSR outcomes shall lead to prioritization of key interventions/activities to be included in the forthcoming financial budget. Main suggestions from the review will be incorporated in the work plans and budgets of the respective line ministries for the next fiscal year as well as could inform work plans of other implementing organizations (development partners, CSOs and private sector). The JSR also therefore serves as a platform of shared accountability in terms of commitments and consensus building on priorities.

This activity will contribute to the SDG (Sustainable Development Goal) Target 4.1. which requires states to realize "that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes." At the global level, the agenda around the SDG 4 (Quality Education) to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' by 2030, has reinforced a focus on learning assessment to gain data that allow to establish and monitor education quality and learning progress.

The specific objectives under this assignment include:

1. Designing a JSR process demonstrating how events will flow to achieve the expected deliverables,
2. Identifying the activities comprising the JSR and generating detailed implementation map for each activity,
3. Providing capacity building support to the Department for Project Development and Monitoring of the MoESCS for leading the JSR process.

4. Providing coaching during the JSR including support to the local consultant in the review of the progress of implementation, reviewing the draft JSR report and preparing recommendations for the revision of the report.

Key stakeholders of the assignment are the government line ministries, namely the MoESCS, the Ministries of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure (MoTAI), RA National Assembly Standing Committee on Science, Education, Culture, Diaspora, Youth and Sport, sub-national and local authorities (including Yerevan Municipality), the GPE Secretariat, UNICEF, the Asian Development Bank, EU, the World Bank, other international development partners, and dedicated CSOs.

The knowledge generated by the JSR should be used by the MoESCS to inform and amplify its actions for the further education budget plannings. It will be also used by UNICEF and other national stakeholders to further refine the quality, targeting, groundedness and timeliness of policies in the field of general education.

Scope of Work:

Context

In 2019, the MoESCS requested development partners' support for the development of the Education Development Strategy. The Republic of Armenia received GPE funding through the Education Sector Plan Development Grant (ESPDG) facility to conduct a comprehensive Education Sector Review. The MoESCS established a Local Education Group (LEG), which has been titled Commission on Development, Coordination and Endorsement of Education (CDCEE). The latter nominated UNICEF as GPE ESPDG Grant Agent, with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) nominated as Coordinating Agency. The rationale for application to the GPE was guided by the MoESCS objective to establish a systematic approach and institutional structure for education sector analysis, enhancing the quality of education sector plans, budgeting as well as to ensure regular participatory and joint education sector reviews.

According to the Law on Education (1999), the Education Sector Plan shall be considered as a foundation for state policy in education, and the State shall ensure the development of education through targeted budgetary financing according to the Program (Article 4.4 & 5; 2015). Since 1991, only two education sector plans were developed and implemented. The first one for 2001-2005 and the second one for 2011-2015. Both programs were based on achievements already accomplished in the educational system and set out the main development goals for the given period. Since 2016, the education system in Armenia has been functioning without an education sector plan. In 2022, the MoESCS developed and finalized the State Education Development Programme of the Republic of Armenia until 2030, supported by the ESPDG. Additionally, in 2022 MoESCS developed the Action Plan adjacent to the Education Sector Plan, which was adopted in March 2023. The Government's aspiration for education is to create an inclusive student-centered learning environment for all with a focus on education quality and equity in line with SDG 4 targets.

The overarching objective for JSR is to provide opportunity for the key education stakeholders to assess the overall performance of the sector, against the key performance indicators set out in the Education Sector Plan and to review the adjacent implementation plans. Major processes include broad consultations at both national and sub-national levels with key stakeholders, including relevant line ministries, regional and local authorities, academia, CSOs, teachers, adolescents, and youth, field visits if necessary. Key international development partners, such as UNICEF, the EU, ADB and the World Bank (WB), among many others, are also part of the consultative process that helps to establish the criteria and identify key priorities for the Education Sector in Armenia in line with SDG 4.

Methodology

The JSR will focus on the assessment of the progress and performance of sectoral targets and verify achievements against established indicators. The consultant is expected to support the MoESCS and its adjacent agencies in developing processes and designing a tool for planning, conducting and reporting of a JSR. The methodology should be based on GPE JSR guidelines <https://www.globalpartnership.org/node/document/download?file=document/file/2018-09-GPE-joint-sector-reviews-EN.pdf>. It includes (but is not limited to): (1) desk reviews of similar countries that have a well-established and functioning JSR process, and consultative meetings, (2) preparation of a guidebook for JSR including detailed activities and implementation roadmaps, (3) training of the Department for Project Development and Monitoring of the MoESCS and nominated agencies under the MoESCS in incorporating JSR processes in Monitoring and Evaluation activities performed by the Department, and (4) provide coaching during the JSR including support to the local consultant in the review of the progress of implementation, review the draft JSR report and prepare recommendations for the revision of the report. The international consultant shall work closely with a local consultant, who will be hired to support the JSR implementation process.

Ethical Consideration

The Consultant will ensure that the process is in line with UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis¹ and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation². The Consultant should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty while interacting with stakeholders and beneficiaries. Furthermore, the Consultant should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual information. In the case of consultations with relevant stakeholders, all participants should be informed about the context and purpose of the Appraisal, as well as about the confidentiality of the information shared. The Consultant can use documents and information provided only for the tasks related to these terms of reference. The appraisal process should be independent of the actors who contributed to the education plan preparation.

Child Safeguarding

Is this project/assignment considered as “[Elevated Risk Role](#)” from a child safeguarding perspective?

YES NO If YES, check all that apply:

Direct contact role YES NO

If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of direct interpersonal contact with children, or work in their immediately physical proximity, with limited supervision by a more senior member of personnel:

Child data role YES NO

If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of manipulating or transmitting personal-identifiable information of children (name, national ID, location data, photos):

More information is available in the [Child Safeguarding SharePoint](#) and [Child Safeguarding FAQs and Updates](#)

¹ Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/documents/unicef-procedure-ethical-standards-research-evaluation-data-collection-and-analysis>

² See UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866>

Budget Year:	Requesting Section/Issuing Office:	Reasons why consultancy cannot be done by staff:	
2023	Education Section	The work needs specific expertise which is not available in the office.	
Included in Annual/Rolling Workplan: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No, please justify:			
<p><i>The posting contributes to UNICEF 2021-2025 Country Programme Document (CPD) Outcome 3: “People exercise their talents and skills, benefitting from age-appropriate, life-long learning, inclusive and quality education in an enabling and safe environment”, and to Armenia-UNICEF Multi-Year Work Plan 2022-2023 under Output 3.1: National systems and capacities of officials and other stakeholders are strengthened to develop evidence-based policies, plans and budgets, ensuring inclusive and equitable education outcomes for all children, and Activity 1.2: Contribute to the development/establishment of sectoral programme goals, objectives, strategies, and results-based planning through equity focused research, collection, analysis and reporting of education and other related information for development planning and priority and goal setting.</i></p>			
Consultant sourcing: <input type="checkbox"/> National <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> International <input type="checkbox"/> Both		Request for: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New SSA – Individual Contract <input type="checkbox"/> Extension/ Amendment	
Consultant selection method: <input type="checkbox"/> Competitive Selection (Roster) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Competitive Selection (Advertisement/Desk Review/Interview)			
If Extension, Justification for extension:			
Supervisor: UNICEF Education Specialist		Start Date: 1 August 2023	End Date: 31 January 2024
		Number of Days (working) 46	

Work Assignment Overview			
Tasks/Milestone:	Deliverables/Outputs:	Timeline ³	
<p>1. Preparation for JSR launch</p> <p>1.1 Carry out a desk review of similar countries that have a well-established and functioning JSR process with the aim of demonstrating best practices in JSR.</p> <p>1.2 Organize on-line meetings and consultations (5-10 overall) with key partners and LEG members (upon necessity), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government agencies at central level: MoESCS, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, etc. (up to 5 meetings) • Education authorities at sub-national levels (up to 2 meetings). • International development Partners, CSOs, education experts and public and private education providers (teachers, school managers, etc.) (up to 4 meetings). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review report - PPT developed on the main findings and shared with UNICEF one day prior its presentation to the LEG validation workshop. 	<p>End of August 2023</p> <p>15 working days</p>	
<p>2. Preparation of a guidebook for JSR which includes detailed activities and implementation roadmaps for Armenia as per the GPE guidelines and recommendations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guidebook for JSR implementation 	<p>Early September 2023</p> <p>10 working days</p>	
<p>3. Training of the Department for Project Development and Monitoring of the MoESCS in incorporating JSR processes in Monitoring and Evaluation activities performed by the Department</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PPTs and training manuals 	<p>End of September 2023</p> <p>10 working days</p>	
<p>3. Provide coaching during the JSR including support to the local consultant in the review of the progress of implementation, assistance with identification of report structure, assistance with writing the draft JSR report and prepare recommendations for the revision of the report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progress reports - Draft JSR with consultant comments and recommendations 	<p>November- December 2021</p> <p>6 working days</p>	
<p>4. Peer review of the final report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JSR final report 	<p>December – January 2024</p> <p>5 working days</p>	

³ Exact deadlines will be mutually agreed upon contract signing.

<p>Minimum Qualifications required:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bachelors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Masters <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <p>Enter Disciplines</p> <p>Advanced university degree and/or academic background in Education, Sociology, Economics, Public Policy, Social Policy or a related field.</p>	<p>Knowledge/Expertise/Skills required:</p> <p>Qualifications or specialized knowledge/experience required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 8 years of documented experience in education planning, management, monitoring and/or evaluation with solid knowledge of Armenia’s national education system. • Experience of organizing past JSRs or evaluations/assessments of education sector programs will be considered an advantage. • Very good communication and presentation skills with government and international organizations. • Fluency in written and spoken English, including report writing skills. • Previous experience in working with UN agencies will be an asset.
<p>Administrative details:</p> <p>Visa assistance required: <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Transportation arranged by the office: <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Home Based <input type="checkbox"/> Office Based:</p> <p>If office based, seating arrangement identified: <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>IT and Communication equipment required: <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Internet access required: <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Terms of the application:</p> <p>The deadline for the submission of applications is 25 May, 2023. Applications should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover letter; • CV; • Financial Proposal; • Published research and analytical documents relevant to the TOR; • Examples of published work (paper, abstract, proceedings) in top international conferences and SCOPUS-indexed high-quality journals will be an asset. 	
Empty space for additional information	