Expression of Interest

The Antenna in Sarajevo of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe is seeking expressions of interest from qualified and experienced institutions, legal entities and individuals to support the project "Re-imagining Education for Marginalized Girls and Boys during and post COVID-19 in Bosnia and Herzegovina"

UN agency: UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, Antenna in Sarajevo (hereinafter UNESCO)

Location: Home Based with travel within BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (BiH)

(Application Deadline: 01 February 2021(Midnight, Paris time)

Type of Contract: Individual Contract

Post Level: Local/International Consultant

Languages Required: English, languages of peoples in BiH (Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian)

Duration of Initial Contract: 15 February 2021 – 15 March 2021

Expected Duration of Assignment: 15 working days

Background

In the framework of the UN Socio-Economic Response Plan in BiH, UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO and UN Volunteers developed „Re-imagining Education for Marginalized Girls and Boys during and post COVID-19 in BiH” programme to assist education authorities in three pilot administrative units in mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as to strengthen the capacities of education authorities and teachers/instructors from pre-school to higher education level for the provision of quality and inclusive e-learning and blended learning.

While the evidence on the access to and quality of e-learning delivery in Bosnia and Herzegovina in lower education levels was gathered through specific assessments and analyses conducted in the aftermath of the COVID-19 outbreak and country-wide school closure, there is an evident lack of data available on the implementation of e-learning at higher education level.

From mid-March 2020, as part of preventive measures in curbing the spread of the COVID-19 infection, 31 higher education institutions1 in Bosnia and Herzegovina were closed, directly affecting the learning process of 79,886 students enrolled in the academic year 2019/202 and 9,844 employees in the teaching

Based on the evidence gathered through Rapid Situation and Needs Assessment-Education in Bosnia And Herzegovina-Phase II, jointly conducted by UNICEF and UNESCO from June to August 2020, all university institutions have introduced e-learning on **ad hoc** basis in order to ensure learning continuity for their students. However, the quality of e-learning, as well as the teachers/trainers needs in e-learning delivery could not be fully assessed at that stage due to the lack of information available to education government authorities regarding the delivery of e-learning during the country-wide school and university closure.

Thorough assessment of the quality, shortcomings and challenges of university institutions for e-learning delivery, as well as the assessment of the higher education teachers/trainers' needs are indispensable and relevant not only in the context of the abovementioned UN assistance to education authorities during COVID-19 pandemic, but also in a view of enhancing capacities and readiness of higher education systems to address future crises.

Against this background, UNESCO will engage competent expert consultant for 15 working days, who will conduct two relevant assessments:

1. **Assessment on quality of e-learning at higher education level in Bosnia and Herzegovina;**
2. **Assessment on needs of teachers/trainers in e-learning delivery at higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina.**

The above assessments need to include all administrative units covered by this activity, taking into account all public higher education institutions (8), where applicable, and at least 50% of private higher education institutions from these administrative units.

The findings of the two above assessments will be delivered in one Analytical Report, as explained below. Following the completion of analytical work, the results will be shared with all relevant higher education stakeholders in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Duties and Responsibilities**

The Consultant will perform the following specific tasks:

A) **Conduct a participatory review of the existing e-learning methodologies and practices at higher education level and identify opportunities and gaps that can be translated into specific measures;**

B) **Conduct a participatory review of major teachers/trainers’ needs at higher education level in the context of e-learning delivery, in order to identify opportunities and gaps that can result in sustainable policy recommendations.**

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3 ibid.
4 Higher education institutions operate in nine administrative units in BiH: Republika Srpska, Brcko District, Sarajevo Canton, Tuzla Canton, Zenica-Doboj Canton, Una-Sana Canton, Bosnia-Podrinje Canton, Herzegovina-Neretva Canton and Central Bosnia Canton
The above assessments will be conducted in the following manner:

- Review and analyze major teachers/trainers’ needs, as well as the existing e-learning methodologies and practices in use/used during and after the country-wide school closure period at higher education institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina (public and private ones). This will be performed through collection of quantitative and qualitative data, desk reviews, conduction of surveys, and organisation of interviews with representatives of higher education institutions (management personnel, teachers/trainers, students, etc.) to capture their perspective and solicit ideas.

- Based on the assessment, identify strategic gaps and/or opportunities that can be addressed, and provide achievable and sustainable policy recommendations for authorities.

The work under this Consultancy will be captured in a sharp and thorough Analytical Report, reflecting the findings of the above two assessments. The Report should include (but may not be limited to) the following chapters:

1. Introduction and purpose of the analysis;
2. Methodology;
3. Assessment of the existing distance and e-learning tools and platforms in use/used at higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina including:
   3.1. All forms of distance and e-learning tools and platforms in use in higher education institutions;
   3.2. Students’ access to e-learning tools and platforms (connectivity and availability of ICT equipment), particularly focusing on vulnerable groups and students with disabilities;
4. Assessment of teachers/trainers’ challenges and needs in e-learning delivery (technical and methodological capacities);
5. Overview of strategic gaps and/or opportunities that can be addressed, accompanied by policy recommendations, both for the use of e-learning tools and platforms, as well as the teachers/trainers’ needs.

In order to successfully accomplish the assigned missions, the consultant will work under the supervision of the UNESCO staff in charge of education. All materials prepared by the consultant, will need to be approved by UNESCO prior to sharing with the higher education stakeholders.

Qualifications and skills

a) Corporate Competencies
   - Demonstrates commitment to UNESCO mission, vision and values;
   - Displays cultural, gender equality, religion, age sensitivity and adaptability.

b) Functional Competencies
   - Excellent knowledge and demonstrated experience on educational sector strategies and policies, international and those in use in BiH;
   - Excellent knowledge and demonstrated experience in application of distance and e-learning methodologies at higher education institutions;
• Excellent knowledge of international standards and especially UNESCO legal, policy and operational standards in the field of education;
• Excellent communication and analytical skills;
• Excellent interpersonal skills, demonstrated negotiation and inter-cultural communication skills;
• Record on previous experience in similar projects/task implemented.

c) Education and experience
• PhD degree with 7 years of experience or master degree combined with at least 10 years of relevant experience. This can be a combination of employment, consulting, internships and/or research in education management, international relations, or development studies preferably with a focus on policies and/or capacity development. Preference will be given to candidates who previously worked in Bosnia and Herzegovina and/or South-East Europe and/or the EU. Experience working with the governments and within the UN system is an advantage.

d) Language Skills
• Excellent knowledge of English;
• Fluency in one of the official languages of peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian).

Duration
The task is expected to be:
• Implemented between 15 February and 15 March 2021 and in any case, no later than 15 of March 2021;
• Carried out spending a maximum of 15 working man/days during the abovementioned implementation period.

Sources informing ToR guidelines
Expression of interest and selection criteria

Interested consultant must submit the following documents/information to demonstrate qualifications:

- Personal CV including past experience in similar projects and at least 3 references;
- Proposal providing a brief methodology on how the task will be approached and conducted;
- Sample of previous document/strategy/paper in education sector done by the consultant.

Expressions of interest will be selected based on the evaluation of 3 equally important criteria: quality of the technical proposal; qualifications of the expert(s) concerned; and, competitiveness of the financial proposal.

Those short-listed will be notified no later than **one week after the closing date**.

The maximum compensation for this assignment will include fees for a maximum of 15 working days (based on UNESCO standards for individual consultants). The final contractual amount payment will depend on the technical and financial proposal and the applicable UNESCO rules and regulations.

Due to the COVID-19 situation and preventive measures in place, UNESCO will discourage missions to ministries of education/higher education institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore, for the purpose of conduction of interviews with relevant education stakeholders, the use of available online communication platforms is strongly recommended.

However, if the situation allows, missions to ministries of education/higher education institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, not exceeding 5 days in total, should be planned, and related cost of which (i.e. travel and accommodation), should be part of the financial offer. This costs could not exceed DSA rates established by UNESCO according to its policy. The mission days are included in the total experts days mentioned.

For additional information, if required, please contact Ms. Amila Planincic at a.planincic@unesco.org

Expressions of interest should be submitted by email, clearly stating "Assessment of Quality E-learning and Teachers' Needs in Higher Education Institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina" to Ms. Maja Nikolic at m.nikolic@unesco.org