

Serbia Accelerating Innovation and Growth Entrepreneurship Project

Terms of Reference

NITRA Senior Consultant (Part-time)

1. Background

Serbia has received a loan from the World Bank Group for the Serbia Accelerating Innovation and Growth Entrepreneurship Project (SAIGE Project)¹ to support the strengthening of the Serbian Innovation and Entrepreneurship ecosystem. The main objective of the Project is to improve (i) the relevance and excellence of scientific research; and (ii) innovative entrepreneurship and access to finance for enterprise growth, as a way of contributing to Serbia's growth and competitiveness. The European Union Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA-II) is also providing complimentary financing support for the SAIGE Project. The Project includes the following three components:

Component 1: Research Sector Reforms – (i) Operationalization of Science Fund including capacity building, and design and implementation of Science Fund grant instruments, and provision of competitive grants to researchers; (ii) Research and Development Institutes (RDIs) reforms through independent evaluation, preparation and implementation of transformation plans, as well as policy development support to Ministry; (iii) Design of Serbian Diaspora Facility and provision of grants for visits and joints projects with diaspora.

Component 2: Enterprise Acceleration – Establishment of Katapult Program, a co-investment fund and acceleration program, including the provision of technical assistance facility necessary for the program execution.

Component 3: Project Implementation, Monitoring, Capacity Building

Until October 2022, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD) was responsible for the overall Project coordination and implementation, and execution of Component 1.2 RDI Reforms. As a result of the Government reorganization after the April 2022 elections, a new line ministry – Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation (NITRA, hereinafter: the Client) – has been established as the successor and tasked with the Project coordination and implementation. On a daily level, the Project is coordinated and implemented by the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) at the Client level, comprising of a PIU manager, project officers for the three Project components, experts for environmental and social standards, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), RDI Reforms advisors and analyst, and other technical and administrative staff.

2. Objectives of Engagement

The objective of the Consultant's engagement is to support the Client in enhancing the visibility and partnership potential of RDI activities in Europe among the research community, key stakeholders and policymakers. The Consultant should provide expert support on capacity building in emerging innovations related to RDIs and innovative startups participation and technology transfer with international research and innovation organizations such as European

¹ <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P170185>

Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), Fraunhofer Society, Max Planck Institute for Innovation and Competition, French Nationale Centre for scientific research (CNRS), National Research Council of Italy (CNR) and others, including further strategic exploring of potentials for increased absorption of the collaboration possibilities, focusing on RDI fields;

Therefore, specific expertise within the Client/PIU is needed in order to secure boosting the results of the internal transformation and development process into high-potential partnerships for research and innovation, interacting with the key stakeholders and participation in important professional and policy-making networks and research infrastructures, including European Commission directorates, competitive EU funding schemes for research and innovation, and other key stakeholders.

3. Scope of Work

Following are the specific tasks and responsibilities of the engagement of the Consultant:

1. Providing expert support to NITRA/PIU capacity building in emerging innovations related to RDIs and innovative startups participation and technology transfer with the international research and innovation organizations and networks, and further strategic exploring of potentials for increased absorption of the collaboration possibilities;
2. Support the NITRA and PIU in the sound realization of the Subcomponent 1.2 RDI Reforms activities in regard to strategic networking of the participating RDIs and NITRA with European leading institutions, organizations, networks and research infrastructures;
3. Provide effective high-level support to the management of the participating RDIs in mapping key international stakeholders, establishing links, building partnerships and networking with the European Commission and relevant directorates;
4. Support the Project Manager and NITRA related to high-level strategic policy and legislative issues on science, research and development, innovation, technology transfer, research infrastructures, capacity building and networking;
5. Participate in relevant conferences, workshops, meetings and training events, as required to fulfil tasked role;
6. Perform other duties in support of Project implementation as required by the Project Coordinator, Project Manager and NITRA.

The Consultant will conduct the work in line with the relevant Project documents including the Loan Agreement, Project Appraisal Document (PAD), and RDI Transformation Operations Manual.

The Client will provide access to all relevant documents.

4. Experience and Qualifications

- PhD academic degree, preferably in technical or natural sciences;
- At least 15 years of relevant professional experience in Serbian research and/or academic sector;
- Previous experience in RDI or University/Faculty management positions will be considered as strong advantage;

- At least 5 years of experience in the international organizations, the European Commission, the World Bank, or other international organizations;
- Previous experience in public policy making and implementation in Serbian and European research and/or academic sector considered as strong advantage;
- Experience in strategic planning and performance management in RDIs or public institutions;
- Experience in preparing and chairing meetings and conferences aimed at networking and ensuring cooperation among research sector and public institutions;
- Excellent spoken and written English and Serbian;

Selection criteria:

The candidates will be evaluated by applying the following evaluation criteria:

- Qualification and General experience (40 Points)
- Specific Experience Relevant to the Assignment (60 Points)

5. Timeframe and Duration

The Consultant will be engaged on a part-time basis until September 30, 2025.

The expected initial time effort for the assignment is up to 10 working days (i.e., 80 hours) per month. Depending on the need there is a possibility of increasing the time effort.

6. Reporting Requirements

The Consultant will work under the supervision of the Client/Project Manager to whom he/she directly reports.

The Consultant should prepare monthly activity reports (timesheets) in which he/she will summarize key issues and emerging and day-to-day tasks undertaken. In addition, the Consultant will prepare progress and ad hoc reports and documents where so required by the Project. These reports will be provided on paper (when necessary) and electronically in the English/Serbian language.

Each monthly timesheet must be firstly approved by the Client/PIU Project Manager.

7. Terms of Payment

The contract, in the form of the Standard World Bank Time-Based Contract for Individual Consultants, will be entered into between the Consultant and the Client. Payment for services rendered will be made monthly.

8. Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

The Consultant will maintain confidentiality on all information that is not in the public domain and shall not be involved in another assignment that represents a conflict of interest to the prevailing assignment.