**Section 7: Terms of Reference**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)**

**for**

**Selection of a Consulting Firm to Develop a Strategic Document for Establishment of TVET Quality Assurance Agency**

**Eastern Africa Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project (EASTRIP)**

**(Credit No. 6335-ET; Grant No.: D395-ET; Project ID - P163399)**

**Ministry of Science and Higher Education**

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1. **Introduction**

The Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MoSHE), established by proclamation number 1097/2018 in October 2018, is responsible to lead the development of science, higher education as well as the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Ethiopia. As one of the implementing entities of the Eastern Africa Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project (EASTRIP), the Ministry requires a Technical Assistance (TA) to assist in establishing a National Quality Assurance Agency. These Terms of Reference (TOR) provide some introductory information with regard to the current status of TVET as well as the project and describe the objectives and scope of the assistance, consulting firm’s services requirements, the schedule of work and the proposed arrangement, reporting requirements, and supports from MoSHE/EASTRIP to the consulting firm for the duration of the consultancy assignment.

* 1. **Background on Ethiopian TVET System**

The National TVET Strategy launched in 2008 and the subsequent TVET Proclamation No. 954/2016 have laid ground for governance, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the outcome-based TVET system in Ethiopia with a vision to create competent and self-reliant citizens to contribute to the economic and social development of the country, thus improving the livelihoods of all Ethiopians and sustainably reducing poverty. Based on the guiding principles and directions stipulated in the strategic document, several systemic, operational and quality improvement measures have been taken and remarkable achievements are registered specially in increasing access to TVET for those who are in need. Federal and regional regulatory as well as operational and TVET providing institutions are organized with duties and responsibilities identified following principles of decentralization and the federal government administrative structure.

The Federal TVET Agency has been established as an autonomous federal government organ having its own legal personality through the Regulation No.199/201l issued by the Council of Ministers. Being accountable to the then Ministry of Education, and currently to MoSHE, the Agency has an objective, among others, to ensure that TVET is properly organized and its quality and sustainability are maintained with a view to realizing the country's objectives for economic and social progress. In direct connection to ensuring quality, the Agency is empowered to develop standards and legislative framework required for the implementation of the strategy, establish a system for occupational assessment and issuance of national qualification certificates and set guidelines for the accreditation of training institutions and occupational assessment centers as well as to follow up the implementation of same. These duties and responsibilities of the Federal Technical and Vocational Education and Training Agency have been further solidified by the Federal Government Proclamation No. 954/2016 which mandated the Agency to coordinate the overall technical and vocational education and training system.

However, the system is still struggling in making its education and training provisions relevant to the need from the demand side and produce quality graduates. The earliest roadmap study for education and training indicated that the system also remained challenged and complained by its clients and stakeholders from the labor market with their demand for more transparent process of quality assurance and higher levels of participation in the overall decision-making process.

In general, the system could not proof itself as reliable and trustworthy contributor to the economy in supplying the different socio-economic sectors with quality and fit-to-purpose workforce they demand. The very few assessments conducted on the implementation of TVET strategy have shown that existing TVET bodies both at Federal and Regional levels function both as regulatory and operational bodies resulting in conflict of interest and transparency challenges. These have been exhibited in the course of assuring TVET quality, which requires professionally strong and dedicated and, more important, independent institution responsible and accountable for righteous implementation of quality standards.

* 1. **Background of the EASTRIP**

The World Bank Group in consultation with national governments of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania has developed the Eastern Africa Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project (EASTRIP) to be implemented within the Eastern African countries of Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania. The project was approved by the World Bank on 30th October 2018 and is expected to be in existence until 31st December 2024.

The overall objective of EASTRIP is to increase the access and improve the quality of Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET) programs in selected Regional Flagship TVET Institutions (RFTIs) and to support regional integration in Eastern Africa. 16 Regional Flagship TVET Institutions were selected from the three participating countries on a competitive basis. The project supports the development of highly specialized TVET programs as well as industry-recognized short-term trainings. It will train technicians and provide training of teachers /trainers at TVET certificates and degree levels, targeting regional priority sectors in transport, energy, manufacturing, and ICT. The project development objectives (PDO) will be achieved through complementary interventions at three different levels:

1. **Strengthening selected Regional Flagship TVET Institutions for high-quality skills development in priority sectors.** The objectives of this component are to strengthen the capacity of the 16 Regional Flagship TVET Institutions (RFTIs) to produce high-quality skills for the regional sector markets in railway, highway, port management, energy, manufacturing, and ICT. RFTIs will be responsible for institution-level project implementation through their respective Project Implementation Units (PIUs).
2. The second component is **creating national TVET enabling environment**: Under this component, the project will finance the development of policy and guidelines to facilitate student, graduate, and faculty mobility and industrial partnership and strengthen the capacity of national agencies that are responsible for the approval of occupational standards, assessment tools, model curricula, Teaching Training and Learning Materials (TTLMs) and accreditation of TVET programs. National Project Coordination Units (NPCUs) will take care of these activities under the auspice of the responsible National Ministries.
3. The third component deals with **enhancing regional collaboration in TVET and project coordination**: The regional component will produce a set of harmonized standards towards mutual recognition of qualifications for priority occupations in participating countries in close partnership with the industry. The component will also support the dissemination of project lessons learned, networking, coordination, technical assistance, and monitoring and evaluation of the 16-regional flagship TVET institutions and the three national TVET systems. The Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) is selected to act as Regional Facilitation Unit (RFU) for the righteous implementation of activities under this component.

Accordingly, established by MoSHE, the National Project Coordination Unit (NPCU) will be dealing with the Component II of the EASTRIP-Ethiopia: implementing key project functions of creating enabling environment for the RFTIs in their effort to implement the project.

The NPCU will work closely with other TVET agencies, including the Federal TVET Agency (FTA), to execute the national work plan of the project and further provide national-level coordination, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), dissemination of good practices from the TVET Institutions as well as provision of knowledge sharing and coordination avenues.

Thus, in connection with the above-mentioned functions assigned to component II and as elaborated through the National Work Plan, the following four subcomponents will fall under the responsibility of NPCU for Ethiopia:

1. Strengthening of quality assurance in the TVET sector,
2. Capacity building for TVET policy development and implementation,
3. Promoting regional integration,
4. Facilitating national project coordination (monitoring and evaluation) and
5. Support regional skills competition.
6. **Rationale for the Development of the Document**

Since the launch of the National TVET Strategy, subsequent regulation and proclamation have come into force and many activities and measures thought to contribute to TVET quality assurance have been pursued following the provisions and directions set forth. Though efforts have been there to benchmark good practices from around the world and import expertise to support the realization of quality assurance concepts and approaches, little have been achieved with regard to supplying the industry with competent and fit-to-purpose workforce as envisioned by the strategy. Though still an in depth study is required in this regard, (a) developing and implementing an appropriate policy and regulatory reform relating to quality in TVET system and (b) building the institutional and social foundation to enable, promote and facilitate efficient and sustainable implementation of the system are highly decisive measures to solve the most pressing issues of TVET quality assurance in Ethiopia. These include:

* No recognition among the different stakeholders that TVET Quality & relevance problem is pervasive;
* Lack of clearly defined TVET quality assurance strategy, vision, mission and mandates (conflict of interest);
* Lack of independent, professional and appropriately resourced TVET quality assurance lead institution;
* Inadequate internal quality assurance system among TVET providers leading to lack of trust and confidence by the industry and the public at large;
* Decentralized Curriculum & TTLM development with no mandated quality assurance institution;
* Lack of minimum requirement for TVET activities related to assessment and certification;
* Very limited industry involvement in quality determining TVET activities (check and balance).

As per the latest roadmap study of the education and training sector and the policy drafted subsequently, it is envisaged that the TVET Quality Assurance Agency will be an independent and dedicated federal service organization playing the leading role in the improvement and sustaining the quality and relevance of TVET programs’ design, delivery and outcomes and thereby ensuring supply of skillful and competent workforce as envisioned through the national TVET strategy. The Agency will work on building trust among the industry and the community by engaging them and carrying out the quality assurance process and decisions transparently. In taking a cue from other countries with decentralized legislation, a central Quality Assurance Agency will level the playing ground for public and private sectors’ clients, stakeholders and partners.

Though the level of autonomy the Agency is to be decided based on the recommendation from this consultancy service, the Agency is expected to be housed in its own building that will be designed based on the recommendations from this consultancy service with regard to its main and subsidiary functions, organizational structure, staffing and their respective responsibilities.

1. **The Consultancy Service**

This consultancy service as per this TOR will basically centered upon support to MoSHE/NPCU in the development of quality assurance system and establishment of the Agency with a capacity and structural arrangement appropriate to provide all TVET service providers with regulatory support essential to improve quality of their provisions as well as to serve as avenue to engage the different public and private agencies concerned with TVET program development and quality aspects. Having this in mind, details of the consultancy service are summarized as follows:

* 1. **General and Specific Objectives of the Consultancy Service**

The general objective of this consultancy assignment is to provide MoSHE/NPCU with the technical support essential to development of quality assurance system and establishment of the lead authority, National TVET Quality Assurance Agency. Specifically, the consultancy service is required to fulfill the following objectives:

* To develop quality assurance strategic document that will be implemented throughout the country,
* To develop internal and external quality assurance mechanisms and standards for the main quality determinant TVET activities,
* To develop an instrument to better assess and monitor TVET institutions and programs,
* To define an appropriate system for registration, accreditation and renewal of TVET institutions and programs,
* To set minimum standard for occupational assessment and certification process,
* To define a compliance audit system that entails accountability for noncompliance of standards.
* To provide guidance with regard to putting in place transparency and accountability framework.
* To develop partnership platform with pertinent national and international institutions as well as clients and partners.
  1. **Scope of the Consultancy Service**

The consultancy service is limited to producing guiding documents for development of TVET quality assurance system and establishment of the Quality Assurance Agency with the capacity and structure to discharge its responsibilities as a lead organization in the area. In general the consulting firm is expected to undertake the following main tasks:

* Develop an inception report that includes critical review of Ethiopian TVET system with regard to quality assurance practices and a work plan for the whole assignment;
* Produce compiled lessons and best practices from some other countries successful in assuring quality of their TVET provisions in competence-based approach.
* Draft a complete TVET Quality Assurance System document with clear definition and framework for the main functions under the system:
  + - setting quality assurance standards for the different outcome-based TVET activities,
    - establishment of Internal& External quality assurance mechanisms,
    - defining quality control and auditing system,
    - establishing registration and accreditation of TVET providing and assessment institutions and individuals,
    - develop stakeholders and partners (domestic & international) identification & communication strategy
    - develop Monitoring & Evaluation system with sample M&E tools for main functions/processes from the perspective of input, throughput, output and outcome,
    - etc.
* Draft TVET Quality Assurance Establishment document that includes but not limited to:
  + - vision, mission and guiding principles,
    - definitions of main and subsidiary functions
    - organizational structure and its connection toan apex body and other institutions,
    - suggestions on undertaking internal as well as external promotion activities,
    - management information system (establishment web-supported database),
    - institutional and administrative manuals,
    - staffing requirement,
    - budget estimate and funding alternatives,
    - detailed establishment plan.
* Assist MoSHE/NPCU with the presentation of the draft system document and recommendations to key stakeholders and finalize documents with incorporation of feedback from the later.
  1. **Deliverables and Reporting Requirements**

The project deliverables and reporting requirements will consist of the following reports and documents:

1. **INCEPTION REPORT:** Presented four weeks after mobilization and covering the consultants' Work Plan for the Project. The Report shall include a review of existing TVET system documents and legislations, regulations and proclamations. The Report shall further include a Plan for identifying and consultations with stakeholders from both public and private sectors to get the feeling of their concerns and interests. The Report will be prepared with an Executive Summary in 20 copies in English;
2. **FIELD TRIP REPORTS**: Presented within a week after return from each field trip. The field trips will be conducted no later than month three after mobilization. It will be a comprehensive review of each field trip and results including quality assurance related observations, organizations/institutions visited as well as appropriate recommendations as an input for the study;
3. **DRAFT DOCUMENTS:** Delivered one month prior to completion of the assignment and reporting on progress toward developing the documents, The Report will include an Action Plan to finalize the documents and will be prepared in [50] copies in English.
4. **FINAL DOCUMENTS:** Delivered upon completion of the assignment and incorporating comments and amendments to the Draft documents. The documents will be prepared with an Executive Summary in 50 copies in English.
5. **FINAL SEMINAR**: The consulting firm will prepare and deliver at an appropriate venue to hold upwards of 100 participants a final seminar discussing final documents. The Seminar should give appropriate time for presentations by policymakers from MoSHE and the consultants Team and provide sufficient time for question and answer sessions.
6. **EXIT REPORT:** Presented upon closure of the whole assignment and termination of the consulting service. The report will include briefing final plans for follow-up and (optionally) setting the stage for future consulting
   1. **Expected Outcome of the Consultancy Service**

After the successful delivery and achievement of expected results from the consultancy service; the following are envisaged as an outcome:

* + Clear legal basis for establishment of independent and dedicated professional institution for TVET quality assurance,
  + Energized implementation of the outcome-based National TVET Strategy,
  + Ensured quality and relevance of TVET programs& graduates guarantying supply of nationally and internationally competent and skilled workforce,
  + Creation of good governance and trust among clients and stakeholders on the TVET system,
  + Accountability, transparency and avoidance of conflict of interest,
  + Creation of conducive environment to establish partnership and strong network at national and international levels
  + Improved resource mobilization (human, financial & material) through strong support from government and partners and investment.
  + Smoothened process of bringing about industry engagement in and ownership of the TVET system.
  + Improved efficiency and effectiveness of TVET investment (efficient utilization of available resources)
  + Improved contribution of the TVET system and graduates to social and economic development of the nation.

1. **Implementation Timeframe and Phases**
   1. **Timeframe**

The assignment will be undertaken and completed within the maximum of Four Months. The inception report should be presented four (4) weeks after signing of the contract. Drafts of both documents (QA system and QAA establishment) are expected to be delivered by the end of the 3rd month. The final reports should be completed and submitted end of the 4th month.

* 1. **Phases of the Tasks**

The consulting firm is expected, but not limited, to follow the below mentioned phases:

**Phase 1** includes the initial contact with the MoSHE/NPCU, preliminary diagnosis of problems attached to quality assurance of the Ethiopian TVET system, planning of initial assignments and submission of an inception report to the client. The plan includes milestones, timelines, submissions of subsequent documents and debriefing sessions.

**Phase 2** includes the real diagnosis of the problems, which includes defining and measuring the problems, researching the problems applying different methodologies (observation, case study, sample survey, desk review or mixed methods), performing an analysis of the problem based on qualitative and quantitative data from the research, then seeking client feedback on proposed actions.

**Phase 3** includes drafting the system and establishment documents which includes developing solutions recommendations and presenting these to the client, finalize drafts with incorporation of feedback from the client side and planning for implementation of system and establishment documents.

**Phase 4** includes presentation of the documents to the wider stakeholders of TVET quality assurance system and the Agency; finalize the documents considering feedbacks from stakeholders.

**Phase 5** includes closure and termination of the consulting service. This consists of submission of the final documents with exit report to MoSHE/NPCU, briefing final plans for follow-up, collecting payment, disengaging, and setting the stage for future consulting.

1. **Governance and Management**

MoSHE in close collaboration with FTA will lead the document development process with the consulting firm while engagement with other key stakeholders.

* 1. **MoSHE/EASTRIP NPCU and other Responsible Institutions within the Sector**
* **NPCU** is the focal point of contact in the implementation of the assignment
* The Technical Team (TT), to be established by and reporting to the State Minister of MoSHE and the National Project Coordinator will be responsible to provide day-to-day guidance during the service period as well as assuring the quality of output.
* Provide an appropriate office space, office equipment (if required) and necessary documentations upon request by the consultancy firm
* Facilitate stakeholder participation throughout system development process.
* Assigns a contact person(s) for the consultants responsible to facilitate communication and the undertaking of activities that works towards effective and efficient outcome.
* Avails staffs for access to information of various kinds in methods like group discussions or individual interviews with the consultant and other engagements.
* Provides prompt feedback on enquires, reports, and other deliverables.
  1. **Consulting Firm**
* Assign qualified professionals to the specific assignment agreed
* Submits progress reports and expected deliverables regularly
* Incorporate feedback collected from the MoSHE/partner institutions and Technical Team members.
* Builds and maintains positive and professional working relationship with co-workers.
* Adhere to quality of works and maintain professionalism.
* Deliver the final documents with editable formats on the specified deadline with maximum quality.
* Must not be engaged in other activities; unrelated to the Ministry’s engagements; that affect the project during the consultancy work.

1. **Values**

* Trust of the client
* Trusting the consulting team and the firm
* Confidentiality
* Honesty
* Due diligence
* Skill

1. **Qualifications of the Consultancy Firm**

The assignment will be managed by a qualified and experienced consulting firm, who has relevant experience and expertise in the TVET sector supporting policy development/reform, implementing institutions establishment/restructuring as well as TVET quality and relevance enhancement with a minimum of 5 years’ experience in the business.

The Consulting Firm will provide a team of experts with the following skill sets who shall be adequately qualified and experienced in the Education Sectors and related fields to satisfactorily and timely deliver the expected outcomes.

CVs for Technical Experts, including the Consultant Team Leader, should be consistent throughout this assignment, and will be examined during the proposal review process. The team of experts to work on this assignment will not change without prior approval by NPCU.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No** | **Name of Position** | **Key Qualification** | **Experience** |
| 1 | Team Leader | MA/MSc in Social and Development Studies, Management, Education, Economics and other related fields | * At least 10 years of demonstrable experience in their fields of specialization * Demonstrable experience working in leading teams consisting of specialists in multitude of areas of expertise and establishment of systems/institutions * Proficiency in English language and knowledge of at least one Ethiopian national/working language |
| 2 | Institutional/organizational development specialist | Post-graduate qualifications in Organizational development and/or management and related fields | * At least 5 years of conducting research both qualitative and quantitative * Demonstrable experience working on establishment and organizational setup of institutions in a decentralized administration |
| 3 | IT specialist | Post-graduate qualifications in the fields relevant to the expertise MSc in Computer science, MIS and related fields | * At least 5 years direct & relevant work experience in the area of speciality * Demonstrable experience working on institutional networking and establishment of web-supported database |
| 4 | Management/policy specialist | Post-graduate qualifications in the fields relevant to the expertise | * At least 5 years direct & relevant work experience in the area of speciality * Demonstrable experience working on development policy/system/strategic documents |
| 5 | Education and training quality standard specialist | Post-graduate qualifications Educational Quality Management, Educational/TVET Quality standard setting and related fields | * At least 5 years direct & relevant work experience in the area of speciality * Demonstrable experience working with both quantitative and qualitative data |
| 6 | Legal specialist | Post-graduate qualifications in the fields relevant to the expertise in Law | * At least 5 years direct & relevant work experience in the area of speciality * Demonstrable experience working in decentralized legal system and drafting institutional establishment proclamations/regulations * Good understanding of decentralized administrative/legislative system |
| 7 | TVET specialist | Post-graduate qualifications in the fields relevant to the TVET Management, TVET Policy, Vocational Management and related fields | * At least 5 years direct & relevant work experience in the area of speciality * Demonstrable experience working within outcome-based TVET system * Excellent understanding of outcome-based TVET system |