

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) FOR INSTITUTIONAL CONTRACTORS**International Institutional Consultancy for Assessment of the
Teachers' Professional Development System****1. Background and Context**

The Montenegrin education system is responsible for over 120,000 children under the age of 18, which represent 21.5 percent of the overall population. The education system in Montenegro consists of preschool, primary, general secondary education (gymnasiums), vocational education, tertiary (higher) education and life-long learning (adult education). Over 10,000 teachers are working in the education sector across the three pre-university education levels.

The comprehensive Education Sector Analysis¹ (ESA), which was finalized and published in November 2022 as a joint initiative of UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, provided an in-depth “sector diagnostic” from the aspects of access, quality, equity, governance, infrastructure, impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, governance, and financing. The Education Sector Analysis, as well as the most recent data and studies show the following key issues:

- According to PISA 2022 results, the number of Montenegrin students not achieving basic literacy level in reading, mathematics, and sciences stand at 53%, 60%, and 55%, respectively.
- The students from disadvantaged socio-economic background are outperformed by their peers by 55 points, which is over 1.5 academic years. (OECD/UNICEF, 2020)
- Every second student attending a secondary vocational program has not reached basic proficiency level in reading. (PISA 2018)
- According to Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS 2023) results², 1 out of 4 students attending 4th grade of primary education score below the benchmark “low” defined at 400 points in science and mathematics, and only 1 percent meeting the “advanced” benchmark.

The Education Sector Analysis showed that the existing Teacher Professional Development System (further in the text: TPD) is one of the key factors impacting the quality of education. According to the Law on Amendments to the General Law on Education (2020), teachers have the right and obligation to improve professionally in various areas through professional development programs and other forms of continuous teacher development. Participation in professional development programmes/seminars is a prerequisite for re-licensing, and a requirement for the career progression of teachers into higher ranks, such as teacher mentor, teacher adviser, teacher senior adviser and teacher researcher³. A licence is issued after passing the professional exam for working in educational institutions and is valid for a period of five years. The licence must be renewed every five years (relicensing), in accordance with the Regulation on conditions on the manner and procedure of licencing of teachers, school directors and assistant school directors for the work in educational institutions⁴. Besides this professional development modality, teachers can also organize school-based professional development⁵.

¹ Education Sector Analysis (ESA) is a joint effort of the Ministry of Education, and UNICEF. The methodology is based on the World Bank/UNESCO/UNICEF Guidelines for ESA and is conducted to provide an in-depth insight into the education system (up to tertiary level) from the aspects of quality, equity, governance, costing and financing. The purpose is to provide solid evidence for developing a comprehensive, multi-year sector plan and help ensure sustained and coordinated implementation of quality and inclusive reforms in education.

² Available from: <https://timssandpirls.bc.edu/timss2019/encyclopedia/montenegro.html>

³ [PROFESIONALNI RAZVOJ NASTAVNIKA/VASPITAČA – Profesionalni razvoj](#)

⁴ [PRAVILNIK O LICENCIRANJU – Profesionalni razvoj](#)

⁵ [PRNŠ/V – Profesionalni razvoj](#)

The Education Sector Analysis has shown that the system of teacher education and professional development needs improvement in some areas. While some elements are well designed and there are continuous efforts at its improving, the TPD still faces several significant challenges that need to be tackled in a systemic manner to ensure that teachers receive the support they need, and that the quality of teaching is improved in the way that all children gain the knowledge and skills they need for success in life and at the labour market. Furthermore, it was through ESA and consultations with the Bureau for Education representatives that the following key findings were formulated:

- Current legislation is insufficiently supportive of professional development and detailed analysis lead to the general conclusion that relevant legislation is insufficiently precise, i.e., both insufficiently elaborated and binding when it comes to various aspects related to professional development, promotion of educational staff, and, particularly so in regard of school-based professional. In addition, only externally provided trainings are considered, while other types of professional development are not evaluated in the process of re/licencing, such as mentoring, public lesson, participation at conferences, etc.
- Teachers' qualifications are not fully aligned with the dominant European, but also regional requirements.
- Teacher training is a requirement for obtaining a teacher's licence and there is a wide range of training courses on offer by the Bureau for Education and other providers. While the Bureau for Education collects data on the number and type of trainings, delivery of modality, and the number of participants (including the evaluation of the quality of the training by the participants), their impact is not systematically and regularly monitored.
- Information on the overall quality and, most importantly, on the effects of the system of professional development of teachers in Montenegro is not yet available.
- The effects of professional development programmes (and hence the justification for the investment in professional development courses) are accompanied by requirements for education professionals (teachers, school support staff, management) to share the knowledge and skills with colleagues, as well as for schools to report on the conducted professional development activities to the Bureau for Education. However, as mentioned above, the procedures for monitoring of the actual impact of the professional development activities are still insufficiently developed.
- Professional development in Montenegro is mostly implemented through training programmes/seminars, and to a lesser degree followed by coaching and monitoring. Additional efforts need to be taken to fundamentally link the professional development process in the way that it contributes to creating school-based learning communities.
- Annually, only about 25–30 percent of teachers were enrolled in professional development courses organized by the Bureau for Education (it is important to note that this figure does not include other providers), therefore further incentives need to be introduced and the quality of provision scrutinized to ensure better qualified teaching staff.
- Data on the level of professional development of teachers, and the number, type, and duration of courses they have attended in each timeframe is not available in the Ministry of Education Information System (MEIS). Data is available at a Bureau for Education web site: www.profesionalnirazvoj.edu.me, including the following information: the title of the training, the priority professional development area, the number of participants, the report with evaluation, the average grade obtained through the evaluation, comments and suggestions.

For all above reasons, there is an urgent need to conduct an overall assessment of the TPD for two reasons: to identify the implementation gaps and competency areas not covered by the existing courses, and to propose a set of recommendations towards creating a system that is more effective and leading to the improvement of the quality of education.

This activity is part of the Quality Education for All Children in Montenegro Project, conducted in partnership between the Ministry of Education, Science, and Innovation, UNICEF, and the European Delegation to Montenegro.

2. Objectives, Purpose & Expected Results

The purpose of this assignment is to provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Education and the Bureau of Education to establish a quality, needs-based, and effective system of teacher professional development aligned with the latest research and knowledge, as well as international and EU policies, related to the key constituents of teachers' capacities needed for providing quality educational service. The aim is that through the teacher professional development system, teachers are provided with knowledge and skills for reflecting on and improving of own and whole-school pedagogical and teaching practices.

In line with the recommendation of the Education Sector Analysis, the objectives of the Terms of Reference are the following: 1) to conduct an overall assessment of the TPD in Montenegro, and 2) to provide recommendations for its further improving its quality and effectiveness.

To achieve the set objectives, the assignment will include the following tasks:

- Desk review of national legislation, strategic frameworks, and all relevant documents and standards regulating the provision of pre- and in-service systems, including the school based TPD model, teacher accreditation, licencing, and assessment, standards for the professional development of educational professionals⁶, the TPD programs quality assurance systems and accreditation, etc., from the perspective of related international and European policies and recommendations. Desk review is also to include the overall processes related to prioritization of teacher professional development programs, as well as in view of available public funding.
- Mapping of the current teacher professional development courses, by looking at the topics covered, modality, providers (public and private), the existing teacher competency frameworks (national, and international, such as the EU ECEC Quality Framework, EU DigComp for Educators, etc.), as well as the needs expressed by teachers and the system.
- Development of the draft methodology for TPD assessment, including quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection. Draft methodology is to be validated and finalized in consultation with the representatives of the Ministry of Education, the Bureau for Education, and teachers' associations. The methodology is to cover preschool, primary, and secondary education (both general and VET), also including student dormitories, resource centres, and music school.
- Data collection, in line with the agreed methodology.
- Development of the Assessment Report with Findings, and Recommendations, including examples of good practice at international and regional levels, especially those promoting and enabling a broader concept of the TPD that allows for recognition of a variety of professional development opportunities (peer and school exchanges, international/regional/local exchanges of knowledge and experience, as well as alignment of the TPD system courses with key teachers' competencies and individual and school needs, etc.). In addition to the recommendations, the Assessment Report is to include a Roadmap of Actions for TPD improvement, as well as a guidance for establishing a database of teachers within the Montenegrin Education Information System (MEIS).

In line with the recommendations of the Education Sector Analysis, the TPD assessment should provide clear guidance towards aligning the TPD with national, EU and international standards, as well as with the needs of the new Strategy for Education Reform (2025 – 2035) which is to be developed by end of 2024.

⁶ [STANDARDI-kompetencija-final-1-2.pdf \(profesionalnirazvoj.edu.me\)](https://profesionalnirazvoj.edu.me/STANDARDI-kompetencija-final-1-2.pdf)

3. Description of the Assignment

The Consultancy Agency should engage **two members**, out of whom one will be an *international* expert in teacher professional development/teaching quality/teachers' management, and one *national* expert in education.

In regard of the **objective** the team of two consultants should conduct a desk review, based on the existing national and international policies, frameworks, and examples of good practices in pre- and in-service teacher professional development. Based on the results of the findings, the experts should develop an assessment methodology covering preschool, primary and secondary education (both general and VET), including a minimum of five KIIs with policy makers and practitioners, including teachers and teacher trainers, and four focus groups with teachers and school management representatives. The designed methodology should pay particular attention to the regional, urban/rural, gender and other dimension. Following the development and adoption of the methodology, it is expected from the national expert to conduct data collection.

The results of the desk review and data collection should be part of the Assessment report of the system of the teachers' professional development (TPD), along with recommendations and examples of good practice. Before finalization, the assessment report findings and recommendations are validated with key actors and stakeholders.

While leading the process, the international expert should have a crucial role in development of the methodology and final development of the assessment.

The national expert should serve as a liaison between the international consultant and the stakeholders, help solicit inputs from different members, consult the international expert as needed, incorporate inputs in assessment drafts, ensure cross referencing with existing documents ensuring synchronization of activities and indicators and avoiding duplication. The national expert is to be fluent in Montenegrin language.

The following tasks are expected to be completed:

- Desk review of international and national documents and existing policies in education and teacher professional development to ensure that latest knowledge is taken into account.
- Mapping of the current teacher professional development courses, by looking at the topics covered, modality, providers (public and private), as well as against the existing teacher competency frameworks (national, and international, such as the EU DigComp for Educators, etc.)
- Develop methodology that will include both quantitative and qualitative methods, and will cover three levels of education (preschool, primary and secondary), involving both policy makers and practitioners (i.e., teachers).
- Conduct field work and data collection in line with the developed methodology.
- Develop a first draft of the Assessment report, including recommendations for enhancement of the quality and effectiveness of the TPD, and key areas for professional development of teachers in the next five years. and validate the initial findings to stakeholders.
- Hold a validation workshop to discuss the findings and recommendations of the assessment with key actors and stakeholders.
- Participate in discussions, review inputs and make suggestions for improvement throughout the process.

- Develop final Assessment report of the system of the teachers' professional development (TPD) based on the feedback from the relevant stakeholders and including recommendations and a roadmap of actions for improvement of the TPD, proposed priority training areas, and examples of good practice.
- Develop a summary policy document outlining the key findings and recommendations of the Assessment report and a slide deck.
- Present key findings and recommendations of the Assessment report to the stakeholders and validate findings.

Ethical considerations of respondents will be of utmost priority in determining the most appropriate methods and their implementation and will be documented and included in all reports. Special measures will be put in place to ensure that the research process is ethical and that the participants in the process can openly express their opinion. This will be particularly relevant for the data collection as part of the beneficiary assessment.

Specific attention should be paid to issues specifically relating to:

- Harm and benefits: the selected consultancy agency will be expected to avoid constituting a risk to participants in the research, as none of the participants will be stigmatized for taking part in the research, prevented from benefitting from social protection interventions or enticed to participate by e.g. inadequately high participation fees;
- Privacy and confidentiality: The sources of information will be protected and known only to the research team., i.e. ensuring ethical conduct in data generation will be imperative.; and
- Conflict of interest of the research informants: UNICEF expects that any potential or actual conflict of interest will be declared beforehand.

Consequently, the selected consultancy agency must ensure that it is clear to all subjects that their participation in the research is voluntary. All participants should be informed or advised of the context and purpose of the analysis, as well as the privacy and confidentiality of the discussions.

Strict procedures are needed to ensure the confidentiality of the raw data collected. All notes and case file reviews need to be kept securely on the research team's premises and cannot be shared with any person outside the research team. Raw data and notes collected by the national expert shall be destroyed after the publication of the final report. When citing sensitive data obtained from the FGDs, interviews etc., the authors will have to take added precautions and withhold details of the participants' professional titles, institution, and location to avoid the risk of identification.

The first draft and final report of the analysis will need to undergo stakeholder and external quality review, including the independent Ethical Review Committee. The consultancy firm is expected to address these comments in a reasonable amount of time, and to create and update the comments matrix, with justification provided to explain how each of the comments was treated.

Consultancy Agency should propose a breakdown of working days in their Technical Proposal with a clear justification.

Deliverables should be prepared in Montenegrin and English languages.

Some desk review documents are not available in English and the national team member is expected to provide (essential) translation to the international member as and when required.

The Consultancy Agency is expected to use their online platform subscription for participation of the international team members in meetings.

4. Deliverables, timelines, and payment schedule

Deliverables	Timeline	Schedule of Payment
Desk review of international and national documents and existing policies in education and teacher professional development, and mapping of the current teacher professional development courses, by topics covered, modality, providers (public and private), as well as against the existing teacher competency frameworks (national and international) – maximum 8 pages.	By 5 th of August 2024	25%
Delivery of the Methodology (following consultations and validation with all key actors)	By 20 th of August 2024	
Data collection, in line with the developed methodology.	By 20 th of September 2024	40%
Development of the first draft of the Assessment report (maximum 20 pages, excluding annexes), clearly articulating key findings and draft recommendations.	By 10 th of October 2024	
Validation with stakeholders through a workshop and development of the final Assessment report of the system of the teachers' professional development (TPD), including recommendations and examples of good practice (maximum 25 pages, excluding annexes); a slide deck with key findings and recommendations of the Assessment	By 1 st of November, 2024	35%

5. Travel

- The international team member of the Consultancy Agency will be required to travel once within the duration of the consultancy. The national team member may be expected to travel within the country for the meetings and data collection, as well as for participation in events organized to collect feedback from actors and stakeholders.
- Breakdown of travel costs should be separately included in the financial offer. Travel is to be confirmed by UNICEF. • Important: Travel costs will be calculated based on economy class travel, regardless of the length of travel. Costs for accommodation, meals and incidentals shall not exceed applicable daily subsistence allowance (DSA) rates, as promulgated by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC).

6. Management and Organisation

- Management: The consultancy will be supervised by UNICEF Montenegro Education Officer. The Consultancy Agency should communicate with the Education Officer regularly and share all deliverables as they become available for review and potential feedback.
- Organization: International Institutional Consultancy is required, meeting the criteria described below.
- Schedule: This assignment will commence by July 30, 2024.

7. Qualification Requirements

The Consultancy Agency should have a clear focus on education. The consultancy team should consist of one international expert and a national team member. The following are the minimum requirements:

Consultancy agency:

- Research or academic institution with proven experience and involvement in developing policy documents for the education sector, with focus on in pre-service and professional teacher development (examples of specific policies developed should be provided)
- Experience in working on education, human/child rights or social sector analysis projects
- Proven ability to secure a team of consultant working in teacher professional development (information on past projects involving multidisciplinary teams to be provided)
- Demonstrated experience of work with Governmental institutions in the education sector is a strong asset.

International team member:

- Advanced university degree in Education, Social Sciences or another related technical field;
- Minimum 15 years of professional work experience in education, with a focus on pre-service and teacher professional development;
- Proven work experience in international settings, especially in European countries, and record of conducted research, assessment, analyses, policies in education
- In-depth knowledge of international and EU policies and frameworks in teacher professional development.
- Knowledge of the education system in Montenegro is an asset;
- Experience in working with government institutions in the education sector is a strong asset;
- Experience in working with UNICEF or other UN Agencies will be an asset;
- Strong analytical, writing, and presentation skills;
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills;
- Excellent facilitation skills;
- Excellent command of spoken and written English.

National team member:

- Advanced university degree in Education, Social Sciences or other a related technical field;
- Minimum 15 years of professional work experience in education;
- Proven experience in conducting analysis and development of policies;
- In depth knowledge of the systems of pre- and in-service training of teachers in Montenegro, as well as relevant strategic and legislative frameworks and regulations.
- Excellent interpersonal skills, experience in working with government institutions in the education sector is a strong asset;
- Familiarity with the Education system in Montenegro is an asset
- Excellent communication, presentation, and facilitation skills;
- Excellent knowledge of both English and Montenegrin.

8. Application procedure

i. **Technical Proposal including:**

- a) Portfolio of the organisation/institution/agency with examples of previous work on similar projects and clients in the last 5 years
- b) Title/designation of each team member including their CVs;
- c) Detailed description of the methodology and technical approach;
- d) Tentative work plan with the number of days and timeframe in line with the above deadlines for deliverables;
- e) LRPS Form signed.

ii. **Financial Proposal (Budget) including:**

- a) Daily fee rate for each team member per deliverable as well as the total cost per professionals based on the number of working days included in the Technical Proposal.
- b) Estimated travel costs both international and in country travel. Daily subsistence allowance (DSA) will, where applicable, be paid up to a maximum of the official UN rate. (Reimbursement of travel costs / accommodation expenses will be based on actual expenses).
- c) Other costs if applicable.

The financial proposal shall indicate the budget estimated in EUR.

8. Evaluation

- 1) Technical components (total 70 points)

ITEM	TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA	MAX OBTAINABLE POINTS
------	-------------------------------	-----------------------

1	Overall Response Overall Response e.g. the understanding of the assignment by the proposer and the alignment of the proposal submitted with the ToR	10
1.1	Completeness of response - 5	
1.2	Overall concord between TOR/needs and proposal - 5	
2	Company and Key Personnel Range and depth of organizational experience with similar projects - 10	28
2.1	Samples of previous work and client references - 6	
2.2	Key personnel: relevant experience and qualifications of the proposed team for the assignment - 12	
3.	Company policies Company policy on Child labor, Safeguarding and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (articulate policies for the protection & safeguarding of children and prevention of PSEA) - 3	7
3.1	Gender component: At least 1 female in the management structure or ownership of the company- 2	
3.2	Workplace policies on disabilities - 2	
4.	Proposed Methodology and Approach Work plan showing elaborated methodology and approach, project implementation plan, division of responsibilities/workload/days, and timelines, in line with the project - 15	25
4.1	Project management, monitoring and quality assurance process - 10	
4.2		
TOTAL TECHNICAL SCORE		70

Minimum technical score: 70% of 70 points = 49 points or 60% of 70 points = 42 points

2) Financial component (total of 30)⁷

- Technical proposal evaluation. Proposals passing the minimum technical pass score (49 points-70% of the maximum points obtainable for technical proposal) will continue into the financial proposal evaluation.
- Financial proposal evaluation. The lowest price proposal will be awarded the full score assigned to the commercial proposal.
- Recommendation. The recommendation for award of contract will be based on best combination of technical and financial score.
- Final award and contracts. Based on verified nominations and final scores, contract negotiations could be initiated with one or more successful Proposers.
- The UNICEF evaluation team will select the Proposal, which is of high quality, clear and meets the stated requirements and offers the best combination of technical and financial score.

⁷ Financial offer will be reviewed only if Technical proposal meets minimum required quality standards.