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## Terms of Reference

### International Institutional Consultancy – Technical Assistance to the Ministry of Education of Montenegro to conduct a comprehensive Education Sector Analysis

#### 1. Background and Rationale

Over the last decade, the Government of Montenegro has been investing significant efforts to improve the quality and inclusiveness of the education system. Relevant legislative changes were introduced, and a set of strategic policies developed, promoting comprehensive reforms and achievement of important progress in many areas, including expanding coverage by preschool education, increasing the number of children with disabilities attending mainstream school and introducing a dual system of vocational education (combining apprenticeships in a company with vocational education at a vocational school). In Montenegro, there is no single policy framework of the education system, but rather separated laws regulating different levels of education. The Law on Preschool Education, the Law on Elementary Education<sup>1</sup>, the Law on General Secondary Education<sup>2</sup>, the Law on Vocational Education<sup>3</sup> and the Law on Higher Education<sup>4</sup> serve as the basic documents regulating education in the country. In addition, the Strategy for Early and Preschool Education in Montenegro (2016-2020)<sup>5</sup> is aimed at increasing the number of children in preschool education and improving education quality. The Government of Montenegro has recently adopted a Strategy for Inclusive Education (2019–2025)<sup>6</sup> which sets the directions for ensuring quality, inclusive education, based on binding international standards in connection with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and relevant general comments and recommendations of the respective UN treaty bodies.

The National PISA 2015 Report and accompanying Action Plan<sup>7</sup> were adopted by the Government in January 2019, providing clear recommendations and defining activities aimed at enhancing the quality of the education system and enabling students to acquire the key skills and competencies needed for further academic achievement and success in life.

Yet, despite the discernible progress achieved by the Ministry of Education and the Government of Montenegro in advancing the education reform agenda, serious challenges remain in ensuring the quality and sustainability of reforms in the context of an ageing population, a high public debt reaching 70% of the GDP and a high rate of youth unemployment (31.4%)

Insufficient institutional capacities for sector planning, budgeting, coordination and monitoring of reforms are hampering the efforts by the Ministry of Education and other ministries in ensuring quality

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<sup>1</sup> *Law on Elementary Education*, 2017, [http://www.mps.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=219402&rType=2&file=Zakon o osnovnom obrazovanju i vaspitanju Crne Gore lek \(1\).docx](http://www.mps.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=219402&rType=2&file=Zakon%20o%20osnovnom%20obrazovanju%20i%20vaspitanju%20Crne%20Gore%20lek%20(1).docx)

<sup>2</sup> *Law on General Secondary Education*, 2017, [http://www.mps.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=282601&rType=2&file=Zakon o gimanziji.pdf](http://www.mps.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=282601&rType=2&file=Zakon%20o%20gimanziji.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> *Law on Vocational Education*, 2017, [http://www.mps.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=310045&rType=2&file=Zakon o strucnom obrazovanju.pdf](http://www.mps.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=310045&rType=2&file=Zakon%20o%20strucnom%20obrazovanju.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> *Law on Higher Education*, 2017, <http://www.mpin.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=282638&rType=2&file=Zakon%20o%20visokom%20obrazovanju%20-%20jul%202017.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> *Strategy for Early and Preschool Education in Montenegro (2016-2020)*, <https://www.unicef.org/montenegro/media/2671/file/MNE-media-MNEpublication28.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> *Strategy for Inclusive Education (2019 – 2025)*, <https://www.unicef.org/montenegro/media/7876/file/MNE-media-MNEpublication312.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> *PISA 2015 results and education policy recommendations*, <https://www.unicef.org/montenegro/media/8686/file/MNE-media-MNEpublication501.pdf>

education and skills development for all children as a prerequisite for social inclusion and economic growth. While the commitment by key actors is high, horizontal coordination between different sectors on policy and programme design and implementation of programmes is insufficient.

In addition to governance issues, implementation of reforms depends to a significant extent on external financial resources and is not sufficiently embedded in the state budget planning processes.

The Government of Montenegro has recognized the need for strengthening governance and financing of reforms and thus embarked on a comprehensive reform of the public finance management system. Moreover, the Government's Economic Reform Programme 2019-2021<sup>8</sup> highlights the importance of "Education and Skills" and identifies "developing qualifications in line with the labour market needs" as one of the 20 Priority Reform Measures to be addressed.

In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Governments committed themselves to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (SDG 4). Montenegro subscribed to this global goal in its National Strategy for Sustainable Development<sup>9</sup> which calls for "providing inclusive and quality education and promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for everybody" (Strategic Goal 4.1.3). The Agenda 2030 together with the Montenegro's plan for accession to the EU – a key national priority – provide a significant opportunity for realising the right for every child to quality, inclusive education.

The widespread recognition of the importance of education and skills development within the country's national reform agenda and the commitment by the Government to accelerate change provide an important window of opportunity for the Ministry of Education to work with UNICEF and other development partners to strengthen education sector planning, implementation and monitoring as part of the broader public-sector reform. In this light, the analysis of the education sector planned within this consultancy will serve as a basis for developing a multi-year sector plan aimed to improve the outcomes of public spending on education by taking informed decisions on the allocation of resources and improving the conversion of financial inputs into expected outcomes.

UNICEF Montenegro has been supporting the Government to enhance the quality and inclusiveness of the education system in Montenegro in the way to enable all children to reach their full potential. While the commitment and efforts of the Ministry of Education towards reaching this goal are unquestionable, implementation of the multiple and ambitious reforms tackling various aspects of education require systemic and evidence-based planning, prioritizing and budgeting. The proposed analysis of the education sector is a key step in undertaking an in-depth analysis of the sector which is a prerequisite for developing a relevant and feasible sector plan and budget. It is important to note that the education sector analysis will complement and contribute to the current reforms of the public administration and public finance management sectors as well as the Economic Reform Programme for Montenegro (2018-2020)<sup>10</sup>. At the same time, it is important to use the momentum of current wider public administration reforms to help ensure that education sector analysis recommendations are translated into relevant programme and budget planning activities.

Given UNICEF's and partners' extensive research agenda, links will be drawn to national PISA 2015 Report and accompanying Action Plan<sup>11</sup>, Evaluation of the Programme "Montenegro – Investment case on Early Childhood Development"<sup>12</sup>, Research among teachers' knowledge, attitudes and practices on the internet, evaluations of the effectiveness of the programmes for developing the social and emotional skills of students, as well as relevant strategies and policies.

Conduction of the Analysis is recognized by the UNICEF Montenegro Country Programme Document activity related to the *Collaboration with key national counterparts on improving data collection, knowledge generation, overall governance and financing for advancing of the education reform*. UNICEF Montenegro focuses on the capacity building for the evidence-based planning in all CPD areas and analysis will be the major initiative contributing to ensuring the sustainability of reforms.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=347071&rType=2>

<sup>9</sup> *National Strategy for Sustainable Development*, 2016, <http://www.mrt.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=280311&rType=2>

<sup>10</sup> *Economic reform programme for Montenegro (2018-2020)*, <http://www.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=295408&rType=2>

<sup>11</sup> *PISA 2015 results and education policy recommendations*, <https://www.unicef.org/montenegro/media/8686/file/MNE-media-MNEpublication501.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/montenegro/media/2766/file/MNE-media-MNEpublication33.pdf>

## 2. Purpose and Objective

The purpose of the consultancy is two-fold:

- to provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Education in undertaking a comprehensive analysis of the overall education sector, and
- to develop the capacities of the Ministry of Education and other central educational institutions on policy and sector review.

The education sector analysis aims to cover the following areas: early childhood education, primary education, general secondary and vocational secondary education, as well as higher education.

The primary objective of the assessment is to provide evidence-based options for forthcoming reforms, by the Ministry of Education, to strengthen education sector planning, implementation and monitoring as part of the broader public-sector reform. The secondary objective is to provide a diagnostic of the current system, examining the ways to improve the outcomes of public spending on education by taking informed decisions on the allocation of resources and developing relevant multi-year sector plans. While the assessment will seek to answer the following questions, their final formulation will be agreed with the selected consultancy agency:

- What is the socio-demographic and macroeconomic context affecting the education sector in Montenegro?
- What is the quantitative performance of the education system in terms of enrolment capacity, coverage of different age groups, obstacles in access to and completion of cycles, efficiency and exclusion?
- To what extent is the level of investment in education and its trends over time, including the structure and distribution of education financing and the breakdown of spending, as well as the EU accession requirements related to introduction of programme budgeting?
- Which issues and determining factors explain the specific situation of different groups (e.g. boys and girls) and different areas (e.g. rural/urban)?
- To which extent enrolment do patterns and schools results differ based on key socio-demographic factors and how choices in public resource distribution affect equity?
- To what extent does the education contribute to the achievement of national economic and human development goals?
- What are the evidence-based solutions that should contribute to better planning, implementation and monitoring of the on-going reforms in education sector?
- What are the suggested ways to improve the outcomes of public spending, based on the outcomes of the Analysis?

The education sector analysis will just cover current laws, policies and programmes and will not be expected to include previous or future planned programmes or legal frameworks. This is a preferable data source bearing in mind the importance that the goals of the current education policies are achieved in a quality way.

There is no unique Theory of Change for the education sector in Montenegro. So, the analysis should use a guidance Goal Area Theory of change of the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021 <sup>13</sup>. The consultancy agency is expected to develop recommendations in the direction that serves the Government of Montenegro for the development of a unique Theory of Change of the education system in country.

The ambition is that this assignment will not only provide a stocktake of the existing education system, its gaps and challenges, but also generate new evidence for an actionable roadmap on future system reforms that has the buy-in from the main stakeholders in the sector, including the Ministry of Education.

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<sup>13</sup> Theory of Change Paper, UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 [https://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/2017-EB11-Theory\\_of\\_Change-2017.07.19-EN.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/2017-EB11-Theory_of_Change-2017.07.19-EN.pdf)

The process of conducting the analysis, from Terms of Reference development to final report dissemination and follow-up action will involve a national reference group, to be established by the Ministry of Education, for this research. The group will comprise representatives of the Ministry of Education, UNICEF, Ministry of Finance, the General Secretariat of the Government and central educational institutions who also represent the main audience of the research findings. They will be the primary and secondary users of the analysis. The comprehensive sector analysis will be done in a participative manner, with close involvement of line ministries and institutions. The assignment is to be carried out within the period November 2019–October 2020, across the Montenegro. Target population of the Analysis are the representatives of the Ministry of Education and central education institution, Ministry of Finance and General Secretariat of the Government. Analysis will also target the representatives of the preschool institution, primary and secondary school and high education institution in all three regions of the country- northern, southern and central. The final report should comprise of **three main parts**: an executive summary, an extensive analysis part and finally key recommendations and policy briefs for further development of the education sector.

### 3. Methodology and Technical Approach

Based on the Inter- Agency Education Sector Analysis Methodological Guidelines<sup>14</sup>, the analysis will provide methods for carrying out a comprehensive analysis of the education sector. The Methodological Guidelines discusses the context for the development of the education sector, enrolment, internal efficiency, out-of-school children, cost and financing, quality, system capacity and management, external efficiency and equity. The aforementioned document provides methods for carrying out a comprehensive analysis of the education sector in developing countries and places governments at the centre of the process.

In line with the Education Sector Analysis Methodological Guidelines, the analysis will include the following:

#### a) Executive Summary

#### b) Brief description of the methodology and data collection tools

#### c) Context of the development of the education sector - to analyse the socio-demographic and macroeconomic context affecting the education sector, including past trends and future prospects with a focus on the following areas:

- *demographic context*, especially the population group 0 – 24 years of age, gender-disaggregated and with particular attention to regional differences;
- *social development context* - including poverty and inequality data, demographic intensity rate, urban vs. rural population, the prevalence of disabilities, Human Development Index<sup>15</sup>, linguistic context, etc;
- *macro-economic and public finance context* - general economic data, GDP and GDP per capita trends, public resources and their distribution across sectors, regional comparisons, future prospects;
- *institutional context, mechanisms and structures*;
- *economic and political context* - political and economic (in)stability, etc;
- *vulnerability analysis* covering the presence or likelihood of risks, such as disaster, conflict, and economic crisis and their potential impact on the education sector.

#### d) Analysis of enrolment, internal efficiency and out-of-school children - to understand the quantitative performance of the education system in terms of enrolment capacity, coverage of different age groups, obstacles to access to and completion of cycles, efficiency and exclusion. The analysis should cover:

- *the evaluation of enrolment and education system enrolment capacity*;
- *school coverage* - schooling profiles, school life expectancy;

<sup>14</sup> Education Sector Analysis Methodological Guidelines, 2014 (UNESCO, the World Bank, UNICEF, GPE), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/methodological-guidelines-education-sector-analysis-volume-1> (VOL 1), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/methodological-guidelines-education-sector-analysis-volume-2> (VOL 2)

<sup>15</sup> The Human development index.

- *access and coverage* - including supply and demand issues on access (with bottleneck analysis);
  - *equity in coverage and learning* by sub-sectors/education level;
  - *internal efficiency*- student's repetition and attendance, drop-out, out-of-school children with a focus on Roma and Egyptian children, children with disabilities, children in state care institutions, etc);
  - *external efficiency* – to show the extent to which education (and each of its levels) contributes to the achievement of national economic and human development goals.
- e) Analysis of cost and finance** - to show the level of investment in education and its trends over time, including the structure and distribution of education financing and the breakdown of spending, as well as the EU accession requirement related to introduction of programme budgeting. The focus of the analysis should be on:
- *global government spending on education* - expenditure on education as a proportion of gross domestic product (GDP) and overall government expenditure;
  - *Montenegrin public education expenditure* - with the focus on a 10-year time period;
  - *distribution of public education expenditure by sub-sectors/education level*;
  - *average spending per student and a comparison by level*;
  - *equity in the distribution of public education expenditure*;
  - *trends over time* - total expenditure and unit costs;
  - *household contribution to education*, with particular attention to potential regional disparities, urban/rural, and education level desegregation.
  - *share of education expenditure (by government, households, and other stakeholders)*.
- f) Analysis of quality, system capacity and management** - to identify issues and determining factors that explain the specific situation of different groups (e.g. boys and girls) and different areas (e.g. rural/urban). The following key topics will be analysed:
- learning outcomes and achievements, including analysis of the factors associated with learning outcomes;
  - system capacity to support reforms leading to better student's learning outcomes;
  - management of teachers and teaching support professionals, including needs for initial and professional development training, recruitment, but also the system of teacher (re)licencing, school management system, evaluation/learning assessment systems, quality assurance, etc.
  - management of educational resources (financial and physical) and of teaching time.
- g) Analysis of equity**, in order to gather evidence on the extent to which enrolment patterns and school's results differ based on key socio-demographic factors and how choices in public resource distribution affect equity. The following key topics should be analysed:
- The existence and extent of disparities in schooling careers and results according to gender, area of residence, geographic location, children with disabilities and household wealth; and
  - The degree of equity in the distribution of public resources by highest year of schooling achieved (structural equity) and the degree of absorption of public resources by various socio-economic groups (distributive equity/social selectivity); analysis of previous and actual efforts to promote social inclusion and address poverty.
- h) Analysis of external efficiency**, with a view to analysing the extent to which education contributes to the achievement of national economic and human development goals. The analysis is to include:



- A macro-economic review of the extent to which the education system is aligned with labour market requirements, in quantity and quality; analysis of reforms aimed at reducing informal economy;
  - Evaluation of the return on investments in education and training at individual and collective levels;
  - Analysis of the impact of different education levels on living standards.
- i) Additional analysis of a sub-sector or an area – as required and agreed with the Ministry of Education
- j) The comprehensive education sector analysis will include, as primary data source, an **in-depth review** of relevant education and education-related sector policies and strategies, including national and international commitments that include activities and goals related to education. For example, the following policies and strategic frameworks are to be covered by the analysis:
- *Existing national education policies* (Law on Preschool Education<sup>16</sup>, Law on Elementary Education<sup>17</sup>, Law on General Secondary Education<sup>18</sup>, Law on Vocational Education<sup>19</sup>, Law on Higher Education, Strategy for Early and Preschool Education in Montenegro 2016-2020<sup>20</sup>, PISA 2015 Report and National Action Plan<sup>21</sup>, Strategy for Inclusive Education (2019 – 2025)<sup>22</sup>, etc, with particular focus on the relevance and status of implementation, achievements and shortfalls, best practices and provision of recommendations for adjustment;
  - *National Strategy for Sustainable Development (2016 – 2030)*<sup>23</sup>, *the Economic Reform Programme for Montenegro 2019-2021*<sup>24</sup>, highlighting particularly ‘Education and Skills’ as one of the stated Priority Reform Measures, etc.;
  - *International commitments made by the Government* (Sustainable Development Goals; European Union Accession Process, etc) and the extent to which these affect national educational system.
  - *Implementation of government decisions regarding education service delivery*;
  - *Large-scale partner-supported activities* - including issues related to aid effectiveness.

Secondary data source for the analysis should include the interviews and focus groups with the key informants and beneficiaries, in line with the proposed methodology. The size of the sample, in the terms of participants involved and municipalities covered, should be developed in line with the methodology proposed by the consultancy agency.

**k) Key recommendations and strategic vision for further development of the Education sector.**

The proposed recommendations and policy briefs should reflect the key findings of the education sector analysis and offer concrete and actionable proposals for developing quality and relevant multi-year education sector plan, in line with the requirements of the Economic Reform and Public Administration reform agendas. Recommendations should be strategic, evidence-based, sensitive to the context, realistic and achievable and should include the equity dimension. Based on the sector analysis’ findings and

<sup>16</sup> Law on Preschool Education, 2017,

<http://www.mps.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=282596&rType=2&file=Zakon%20o%20predskolskom.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> Law on Elementary Education, 2017, [http://www.mps.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=219402&rType=2&file=Zakon o osnovnom obrazovanju i vaspitanju Crne Gore lek \(1\).docx](http://www.mps.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=219402&rType=2&file=Zakon%20o%20osnovnom%20obrazovanju%20i%20vaspitanju%20Crne%20Gore%20lek%20(1).docx)

<sup>18</sup> Law on General Secondary Education, 2017, [http://www.mps.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=282601&rType=2&file=Zakon o gimnaziji.pdf](http://www.mps.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=282601&rType=2&file=Zakon%20o%20gimnaziji.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Law on Vocational Education, 2017, [http://www.mps.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=310045&rType=2&file=Zakon o strucnom obrazovanju.pdf](http://www.mps.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=310045&rType=2&file=Zakon%20o%20strucnom%20obrazovanju.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Strategy for Early and Preschool Education in Montenegro (2016-2020), <https://www.unicef.org/montenegro/media/2671/file/MNE-media-MNEpublication28.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> National Strategy for Sustainable Development, 2016, <http://www.mrt.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=280311&rType=2>

<sup>22</sup> Strategy for Inclusive Education (2019 – 2025), <https://www.unicef.org/montenegro/media/7876/file/MNE-media-MNEpublication312.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> National Strategy for Sustainable Development, 2016, <http://www.mrt.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=280311&rType=2>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=347071&rType=2>

considering the constrained public finances, they should aim to support a more effective and efficient use of public sector funding through reallocation and redistribution of resources. In addition, they should take into consideration and respond the country's EU accession priorities and the implementation of National Strategy for Sustainable Development<sup>25</sup>.

The consultancy will need to include a transparent and participatory **validation of findings** of the comprehensive education sector analysis report.

- l) The consultancy should also include a strong **capacity building segment** – to be proposed by the consultancy agency - aimed at strengthening the capacities of government and relevant institutions' representatives (including academia), and the reference group established by the Ministry of Education, related to the goals, content and methodologies of the education sector analysis, with a view to creating the capacities for ongoing assessments, analyses, monitoring and planning within these institutions. The capacity building segment is to be conducted through training sessions (up to 5 training days) and should consist of theoretical and practical parts. It should also include on-going support to the MoE established reference group, depending on the extent and modality of their involvement in the review process.

**m) Dissemination of findings**

Final report on the assessment (analysis and executive summary), a policy brief on recommendations of next steps and actionable roadmap/recommendations for the reform of the education system feature as the key deliverables of this process. Due to the expected high volume of data and analysis contained in the full assessment report, the dissemination strategy will involve:

- o Preparation of an executive summary as a standalone document, suitable for both expert and general audience,
- o Preparation of slide decks with key findings and proposed reform options,
- o Publishing of the full assessment report in electronic format.

Stakeholder engagement will be ensured through a national reference group that will acts as a sounding board for the research. As mentioned, it will comprise representatives of the Ministry of Education, UNICEF, Ministry of Finance, Government General Secretariat and central educational institutions who also represent the main audience of the research findings.

UNICEF staff members, consultants, contractors and partners are expected to follow the UNICEF's Guidance on external academic publishing (UNICEF, 2017) in the process of the dissemination of the findings<sup>26</sup>.

**Data sources:**

This assessment will draw-on analysis of secondary and administrative data (Montenegrin Education Management System / MEIS) as well as the collection of primary qualitative data.

The analysis will involve, but is not limited to, a desk-review of existing documents and strategies, including reports of other researches/evaluations/analysis conducted since 2010 as well as relevant planning and monitoring documents of the education sector. It will also involve observations of specific aspects of education sector work, interviews with key informants and focus groups with partners, including beneficiaries, adults and children. Potential limitations to the availability of data, particularly related to financing of the sector of education, should be addressed and solutions suggested in the Inception Report.

The consultant(s) will be responsible for elaborating the final methodology to be employed in their technical proposal and within the inception report, including the exact characteristics of the research participants and sampling criteria for beneficiary participants.

**Timelines:**

<sup>25</sup> National Strategy for Sustainable Development, 2016, <http://www.mrt.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rId=280311&rType=2>

<sup>26</sup> Guidance on external academic publishing for external academic publications by individual UNICEF staff members, consultants, institutional contractors and partners, 2017, <https://www.unicef-irc.org/files/upload/documents/UNICEF-External-Publishing.pdf>

The consultancy is expected to be carried out within the period November 2019 – October 2020. The contract is planned to end no later than October 10, 2020. The selected institution is expected to conduct activities according to the schedule indicated in para 6 and in close consultation with the UNICEF Montenegro Country Office and the Ministry of Education, for the purpose of providing advisory, monitoring and quality assurance function for the duration of the education sector analysis and development of recommendations.

**Logistical issues:**

The research will involve the research team visiting national partner institutions in the capital Podgorica and in selected municipalities in Montenegro. The research team will be responsible for arranging the visits and arranging and paying for, their own road transport while working in the country.

**Reference group:**

National reference group is to be established by the Ministry of Education, for this research. The group will comprise representatives of the Ministry of Education, UNICEF, Ministry of Finance, the General Secretariat of the Government and central educational institutions who also represent the main audience of the research finding. The roles and responsibilities of the reference group will include:

- the quality review of the inception report, draft and final report of the analysis;
- participation in the capacity building training;
- participation in the Validation Meeting of Key Findings;
- support to the consultancy agency during the data collection process;
- all other activities that shall result in successful conduction of the analysis.

**4. Activities and Tasks**

Under the management of UNICEF Montenegro Education Officer, and in close consultation with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF more broadly, the research team will undertake the following activities:

- Prepare an inception report, including details on methodology, information gathering tools, and timeline of activities (max 40 pages)
- Conduct desk review of relevant policies, researches, strategies, etc.
- Conduct field work and data collection in line with the proposed methodology
- Deliver a training on education sector analysis to Ministry of Education representatives
- Develop a draft education sector analysis, including recommendations for future education planning and budgeting
- Draft a policy brief on recommendations of next steps and an actionable roadmap for the reform of the education system and prepare a PowerPoint presentation with overview of findings and recommendations, including recommendations for capacity building needs in terms of planning, monitoring and evaluation of the system
- Participate in technical meetings to present and discuss the findings of the report and produce a roadmap for a future reform process
- Finalize the education sector analysis in line with the suggestions and comments of the national reference group (max 70 pages).

**5. Ethical considerations and quality assurance**



The whole process will be administered in line with the Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, and Data Collection and Analysis (UNICEF, 2015)<sup>27</sup> and Strategic Guidance Note on Institutionalizing Ethical Practice for UNICEF Research (UNICEF, 2013)<sup>28</sup> to ensure the highest ethical standards in all stages. This is necessary both in its own right and as a significant contributor to ensuring quality and accountability in the evidence generation process, especially when it involves children. To achieve that goal, UNICEF Country Office in Montenegro established an independent Ethical Review Committee in 2016, which reviews and approves research methodologies and final research reports, before their publication. The committee is multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral in composition. Child Rights Monitoring and Evaluations Specialist in UNICEF office in Montenegro will facilitate the process for obtaining official ethical approvals.

As per the Terms of Reference, functions of the Ethical Review Committee include the following:

1) Reviewing Relevant Research, Data Collection and Analysis Inception Reports, focusing on a detailed research methodology: to contribute to respect and protection of dignity, rights, safety and well-being of all children, groups and persons related to the concerned project/programme/activity as well as paying attention to the gender perspective. This would include participants in the research/evaluation, community at large, researchers, research community and institution/s. Tentatively, the Committee is expected to:

- Provide feedback on the inception report and/or proposed research methodology within 5 working days following the submission;
- Provide feedback on the draft research report no later than 5 working days following the submission;
- Provide feedback on the final research report no later than 5 working days following the submission;

2) Guidelines: Provision of Guidelines with respect to:

- When a full or expedited review is required and the arrangements and timelines for both.
- Where significant ethical issues arise or where significant changes to the methodology or project occurs during the implementation of the project, the Committee should be notified and a decision made as to whether the changes or issues require ethical review.

3) Analysis and Documentation: Ensuring learning at UNICEF Montenegro and targeted capacity building of national partners through training and sessions related to ethics and other relevant issues of social research. Therefore, 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 service provider will be expected to avoid constituting a risk to participants in the research, as none of the participants will be stigmatised for taking part in the research, prevented from benefitting from social protection interventions or enticed to participate by e.g. inadequately high participation fees;
- Informed consent: With regard to child participants, the prior written consent of both the child and their parent/ legal guardian will be required in order to participate in the FGD (if relevant), using the consent form template the selected service provider will need to develop;
- 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 company has to 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.

<sup>27</sup> [https://www.unicef.org/supply/files/ATTACHMENT\\_IV-UNICEF\\_Procedure\\_for\\_Ethical\\_Standards.PDF](https://www.unicef.org/supply/files/ATTACHMENT_IV-UNICEF_Procedure_for_Ethical_Standards.PDF)

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.ungm.org/UNUser/Documents/DownloadPublicDocument?docId=826374>

To conduct the research, the research team will have to act in accordance with the International Charter for Ethical Research Involving Children developed by UNICEF and others[i] (UNICEF's Ethics Charter), and UNEG's Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. These ethical standards include clear guidelines on the handling of child protection disclosures, ensuring child safety in accordance with the principles of 'doing no harm' and acting in the participant's best interests. The ethical standards also demand that the research team respects the human rights, diversity and dignity of all research participants, including by obtaining their prior informed consent, ensuring their anonymity and protecting their privacy. With regard to child participants, the prior written consent of both the child and their parent/ legal guardian will be required in order to participate in the FGD. Strict procedures need to be put in place to ensure the confidentiality of the raw data collected. All notes and case file reviews need to be kept securely on 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.

No payments or compensation were offered to the research participants. Though, to thank the children for their time and contributions during the FGDs, the researchers will provide refreshments during the FGDs and letters to thank them for their time and informing them of the progress of the research and finalisation of this report.

The inception report, draft and final report of the analysis will need to undergo stakeholder and external quality review, including the Reference Group established by the Ministry of Education and 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.

## 6. Deliverables, Timeframe and Payment Schedule

The consultancy is expected to start in November 2019. A proposed timeline is presented below. It is expected that the team will report any adverse events that may cause the timeline to slip, or any delays during project implementation to UNICEF's Education Officer.

The consultancy firm may propose suitable inputs and level of effort to deliver the outputs. Applicants to this consultancy are asked to submit their daily rate for the work to be undertaken, based on the estimate of the number of days (level of effort) required to complete the work by the deadlines proposed below.

<i><b>Description of the deliverables</b></i>	<i><b>Timeline</b></i>	<i><b>Payment Schedule</b></i>
<b>1. Desk review of existing materials and relevant recent studies- max 7 days</b>		
Findings of the desk review of relevant policies, strategies and Methodological Guidelines for Education Sector Analysis (maximum 10 pages)	20 November 2019	
<b>2. Inception Report and Work Plan- max 8 days</b>		
Preparation of Inception Report (max 40 pages), which should include: a. Methodology- specific methods and data source to be used, an assessment matrix with appropriate metrics and/or benchmarks, initial process mapping, sampling strategy for accuracy analysis, further thoughts on any other areas (e.g., risks, methodological limitations, and so on); b. Detailed Workplan and timeline; c. Outline of the draft report.	30 November 2019	40%

<b>3. Data collection and capacity building for the representatives of relevant institutions and the reference group – max 15 days</b>		
Data collection process should consist of: a. Data collection b. Field trip to Montenegro (meetings with key informants) c. Delivery of the training	10 - 28 February 2020	
<b>4. Delivery of the first draft report- max 20 days</b>		
The first draft report of the analysis (maximum 60 pages, excluding annexes), clearly articulating key findings, conclusions, recommendations, as well as an outline of the Executive Summary (max 5 pages).	10 April 2020	
<b>5. Delivery of the second draft report- max 7 days</b>		
Based on the comments on the first draft Report from the UNICEF, the Ministry of Education, national reference group and other relevant institutions, delivery of the Second Draft Report	20 June 2020	40%
<b>6. Presentation of the Key Findings at the Validation Meeting- 1 day</b>		
1. PPT with key findings reflected in the second draft report (to be sent to UNICEF at least 7 days before the Validation Meeting) 2. Presentation of the key findings at the Validation Meeting in Podgorica, Montenegro. (Field trip to Montenegro; presentation to be delivered by the consultancy agency experts and members of the MoE reference group)	15 September 2020	
<b>7. Final Education Sector Analysis Report, including Executive Summary and capacity building report / recommendations- max 5 days</b>		
Development of the Final Education Sector Analysis Report (max 70 pages), including Recommendations and a Policy Brief, and an Executive Summary (max 5 pages), and Annexes. A Final Report should incorporate comments received by UNICEF and other relevant institutions.	10 October 2020	20%

## 7. Management and Organisation

**Management:** The Consultancy Agency will be supervised by UNICEF Montenegro Education Officer, in close cooperation with Deputy Representative and UNICEF Social Policy Officer.

Quality control of the deliverables will be ensured by the UNICEF Montenegro, the national reference group and the UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia.

**Organization:** International Institutional consultancy is required for this consultancy. *This work will be delivered under the institutional contract.*

**Schedule:** This assignment will commence on November 5, 2019 and end on October 10, 2020.

**Payment schedule:** Payments will be made upon successful completion of the deliverables and submission of invoices.

**UNICEF recourse in the case of unsatisfactory performance:** UNICEF reserves the right to withhold all or a portion of payment if performance is unsatisfactory, if work/outputs is incomplete, not delivered or for failure to meet deadlines.

In case of the any suspected adverse event, the Consultancy Agency should report the situation to the UNICEF Montenegro UNICEF Education Officer, Mrs. Maja Kovacevic immediately and without hesitation.

## 8. Qualifications and experience

### Institution/Company:

- Research or academic institution with proven experience and involvement in developing strategy and policy documents for the education sector (examples of specific strategic documents and/or 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 consultants working across specific education sector areas: early childhood education, primary, secondary, higher and vocational education and financing of education system programmes (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;
- Previous work with UNICEF or other UN agencies is an asset.

#### **Team Leader:**

- Advanced University Degree in Education, Social Sciences, Economy or related field;
- Minimum of 7 years of relevant professional experience in **education** policy development, analysis, research or evaluation;
- Proven experience in quantitative and qualitative research in education or another social field;
- Demonstrated knowledge of the education system in Montenegro is a strong asset;
- Familiarity with international, EU and European Commission policies and benchmarks in education and best European practices in the field of education; familiar with the ESA Guidelines (IIEP/GPE)
- Proficient in practical training to technicians in planning, monitoring and evaluation, including the development and share of useful results-based management tools.
- Demonstrated experience of work with the Government of the Montenegro in undertaking research/evaluations/reviews in the social field is a strong asset;
- Proficiency in English, both oral and written.

#### **Consultants in the team, including at least one national consultant:**

- Advanced University Degree in Education, Social Sciences, Finance, Economy, Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation or related field;
- Minimum of 5 years relevant professional experience in quantitative and qualitative research and evaluation in the education sector and/or relevant technical fields (Social Sciences, Finance, Monitoring and Evaluation, Economy)
- Experience in working with the Government of Montenegro and/or UNICEF or other UN Agencies will be an asset;
- Familiarity with the education system in Montenegro is an asset;
- Demonstrated capacity to analyse policy documents and formulate policy recommendations including efficient and effective use of funding;
- Ability to build capacity of national partners and develop technical and policy documents in working groups with national experts, in a friendly environment
- Good command of Montenegrin and English, both oral and written.

## **9. Content of technical and financial proposal**

### **The proposal should consist of:**

#### **✓ Technical Proposal including:**

#### **a) Portfolio of the organisation/institution/agency with examples of previous work on similar projects and clients in last 5 years, which should include:**

- Title/Designation of each team member on the project and their CVs
- Experience in working on similar project and assignment – List all similar projects they worked on and their roles on those projects
- Project implementation and work plan showing the detailed sequence and timeline for each activity and days necessary for each proposed team member
- Quality assurance mechanism and risk mitigation measures put in place

b) **Detailed description of the methodology and technical approach**, including an on-going capacity building component in the aim of improving the technical capacities of the Ministry of Education for review and planning processes;

c) **Tentative work plan with number of days, timeframe and deadlines for deliverables**

d) **Evidence about the two to three similar assignments** containing the following information:

- Name of Client
- Title of the Project
- Year and duration of the project
- Scope of the Projects/Requirements
- Proposed Solutions and Outcome – include visuals, web-links, etc.
- Team members on each of the project and their specific roles
- Project timelines (start and end date year, and any other information necessary)
- Reference /Contact person details

✓ ***Financial Proposal (Budget) including:***

- Daily fee rates for each team member per deliverable, as well as total cost per professional based on number of working days included in the technical proposal.
- Estimated reimbursable travel costs (all travel must be pre-approved by UNICEF and will be based on most direct and economy class ticket irrespective of the duration of the flight. UNICEF will reimburse the service providers upon the presentation of the travel tickets and boarding pass/receipts etc.). Daily subsistence allowance (DSA) will, where applicable, be paid up to a maximum of the official UN rate.
- Other costs if applicable.

The financial proposal shall indicate budget estimated in USD.

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## **10. Proposal evaluation**

The potential contractors are expected to submit a proposal based on these Terms of Reference. The proposal will be evaluated against the following criteria: (1) relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of proposed methodology and technical approach; (2) organisational and technical capacity of the applicant; (3) relevant experience in similar type of work; and (4) budget. The evaluation of submitted proposals against these criteria will be used as a basis for the selection of the contractor.

**Each proposal will be evaluated against a weight allocation of 70 for the technical proposal and 30 for the commercial (financial) proposal. The total maximum obtainable points is 100.**

### **A) Technical evaluation - Maximum points: 70**

- Professional profile - 25
- Proposed Methodology and Approach – 20
- Quality of Personnel and Suitability for the assignment – 25



Technical Proposal Evaluation Form		Max. Points Obtainable
1	<b>Professional profile</b>	<b>25</b>
<i>In brief: Evidence of experience with similar projects and clients</i>		
1.1	Evidence of experience in similar projects e.g. reviews/assessments of education systems e.g. previous engagements with UNICEF or other UN agencies related to education evaluations, research, sector reviews and planning	10
1.2	Evidence of familiarity with education sector analysis methodologies and tools	10
1.3	Familiarity with key international human and child rights instruments as well as global policies related to education	5
2	<b>Proposed methodology and Approach</b>	<b>20</b>
<i>In brief: Approach, methodology and workplan for the analysis</i>		
2.1	Detailed methodology to conduct the analysis of the education system in Montenegro	10
2.2	Detailed workplan, key milestones and delivery plan for review by UNICEF	5
2.3	Capacity building methodology	5
3	<b>Quality of Personnel and Suitability for the assignment</b>	<b>25</b>
<i>In brief: Evidence of knowledge, skills and experience</i>		
3.1	Academic background and required professional experience for the position of <b>Team Leader</b> (as per the ToR)	10
3.2	Academic background and required professional experience for the position of other team members, including at least one national consultant	15
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70 points</b>

## B) Financial proposal (Budget) – Maximum points: 30

- 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.

