**Skills Development for a Modern Economy Project (SDMEP)**

**Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations (MOELR) of the Republic of Uzbekistan**

**Terms of Reference**

**PIU MOELR Financial Specialist**

1. **Introduction (Objective and Purpose of the Assignment)**
2. Investing in human capital to enable private sector growth and improve the country competitiveness is the Government of Uzbekistan’s top priority. The government plans to implement employment programs to ensure employment of higher and secondary specialized educational graduates and organize training for workforce development. The technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sector reform aims to develop market-relevant skills, through institutional changes. The Education Sector Plan (2019–2023) stresses the importance of matching skills development with the demand of employers through effective partnership between TVET and industries.
3. The proposed Skills Development for a Modern Economy Project (SDMEP) will support improved availability of workers with market-relevant skills. The SDEMP will directly benefit at least 10,000 TVET students, 48,000 jobseekers (including 500 people with disabilities [PWDs]), 600 specialized teachers/trainers and 100 management and staff from the selected professional training centers (PTCs) and technical and vocational educational institutions (TVEIs), 1,200 public employment service (PES) staff, 210 PES management, and government officials, among others. It will also benefit the industries seeking skilled workers, other colleges seeking new training methods and materials, and people seeking recognition of prior learning.
4. The project is aligned with the following impact: employment level of the population, particularly for youth, increased.[[1]](#footnote-1) The project will have the following outcome: market-relevant skills learned by students and job seekers. The project’s planned outputs are as below.
5. **Output 1: Employment and workforce development services improved.** This output will improve the access to and quality of training and job placement services for job seekers, with a special focus on youth and women. At least 48,000 unemployed job seekers will be reskilled at competency levels 2–3 in the priority trades, including agribusiness and food processing, construction, ICT, textiles and garments, and machinery repair and maintenance (i.e., agro-machines, automobiles, and home appliances), including 500 PWD in relevant fields.[[2]](#footnote-2) It will support (i) improving PES capacities for job matching and referral to reskilling services; (ii) updating training equipment for the MOELR’s staff training center, and developing training programs and materials for various training methods, including e-learning; (iii) launching social mobilization activities to promote the access to skills development and PESs, especially for youth, women in nontraditional areas, and MSEs; (iv) updating 14 selected PTCs by providing advanced equipment and upgrading training infrastructure with gender- and PWD-inclusive and energy-saving facilities, including alternative energy provision (solar panels); and (v) setting up two assessment centers meeting competency-based training (CBT) requirements with certified master assessors.[[3]](#footnote-3) This output will adopt the curricula and training materials developed (at certificate level) under output 2, including the essential entrepreneurship training, and facilitate the short-term work-based learning for the trainees. It will also benefit returning migrants who pursue reskilling or recognition of prior learning in the target domains.
6. **Output 2: Quality and relevance of skills development enhanced.** This output will improve the quality and industry relevance of skills development in the priority trades. It is estimated that at least 10,000 TVET students will be enrolled for skilling at competency levels 3–4.[[4]](#footnote-4) Partnerships with industry will play a critical role in curriculum development, work-based training, and developing and delivering entrepreneurship training. This output will support (i) upgrading six TVEIs’ training facilities and turning them into resource centers as change-makers for CBT;[[5]](#footnote-5) (ii) developing and providing for targeted skills areas the certificate- and diploma-level gender-inclusive CBT curricula, modularized training programs, and teaching and learning materials, including e-materials (online and offline); (iii) strengthening the Institute of Pedagogical Innovations, Retraining and Advanced Training of Leading and Pedagogical Personnel of Vocational Education (Institute of Retraining of Pedagogical Personnel under the MHSSE) for updating teachers’ competency requirements and needs-based development plan, and adopting an e-learning platform; (iv) improving PTC and TVEI specialized teachers and trainers, especially in their technical and professional skills and practical training of TVET students; (v) updating entrepreneurship training; (vi) providing gender-fair career guidance and soft skills training for TVET students; (vii) partnering with internationally well-established skills development institutions for training of trainers, assessment, and certification; and (viii) establishing a web-based integrated TVET management information system for evidence-based planning. The TVET management information system will be implemented under the project before evaluation by the government for any rollout.
7. **Output 3: Sector governance and management strengthened.** This output will support the skills development sector governance by (i) strengthening SSCs and sector skills working groups (SSWGs) for the priority trades to enhance the linkages between industries and skills development systematically; (ii) updating occupational competency standards in targeted areas and sector qualification frameworks for the selected trades to improve the applicability, in line with industry practice; (iii) supporting the NSCELP on labor market information monitoring, analysis, and reporting, with national skills gap surveys conducted to inform the evolving demand for skills and guide the plan for training needs; (iv) strengthening the capacity of the national skills competition under the WorldSkills standards; and (v) enhancing the capacity for the development of distance learning materials in the targeted areas and providing basic personal protection products at the targeted PTCs and TVEIs to ensure skills development service continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic. The SSWGs and SSCs will provide the institutional force to ensure that industry needs are reflected in skills development and lead in any further review for updating the training programs. To supplement the skills gap surveys, tracer studies will be done for the project-involved PTC and TVEI graduates to assess their employability and inform in-time responses for improving the quality of skills development.
8. The SDMEP will be financed by the Asian Development Bank and the Government of Uzbekistan. It will be led by the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations (MOELR) and implemented also with the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education (MHSSE), for a period of 6 years from December 2020 to December 2026, to improve skills development to promote job creation and economic growth in a more efficient labor market, with a particular emphasis on youth. MOELR will be the Executing Agency (EA) and responsible for overall reporting on all project activities and ensuring that the project is implemented in accordance with the Loan Agreement. The Project Director will be the First Deputy Minister of MOELR. MOELR and MHSSE will be the implementing agencies, with responsibility for implementation of investment activities under the project and will report on the progress of their respective project activities. As for the project scope, output 1 and 3 will be implemented by MOELR and output 2 will be implemented by MHSSE.
9. MOELR and MHSSE will each establish a PIU with full-time staff. The PIUs will be responsible for day-to-day implementation of the project. The PIU under the MOELR (PIU MOELR) will act as the coordinating PIU responsible for overall project management and compiling annual project progress reports and quarterly progress reports. The PIU MOELR will support the implementation of the project activities specifically related to and/or assigned under MOELR (outputs 1 and 3) and take charge of project coordination by coordinating with the other PIU (under MHSSE). The PIU under MHSSE (PIU MHSSE) will support the implementation of the project activities specifically related to and/or assigned under MHSSE (output 2). Both PIUs will respectively prepare quarterly project physical and financial progress reports, unaudited quarterly project financial statements, and annual audited project financial statements. The PIU MOELR will be responsible for consolidating the project progress reports and submitting them for reporting to ADB and the Project Steering Committee (PSC).
10. The project will finance equipment, reconstruction and renovation of 14 professional training centers (PTCs) under MOELR, and 6 technical and vocational educational institutions (TVEIs) under MHSSE, and provide equipment to the MOELR’s staff training center, National Scientific Center for Employment and Labor Protection, and MHSSE’s Institute for Retraining Pedagogical Personnel. The project will also finance consulting and non-consulting services.
11. **Scope of Services**

Under the leadership of the PIU Manager the Financial Specialist will be provided overall guidance and support for project implementation with respect to financial management following the provisions in the Loan Agreements and instructions in the Project Administration Manual and ADB’s guidelines.

Financial Specialist will be work closely with the International and National Financial Management Consultants.

Financial Specialist will report to the PIU Manager.

1. **Detailed Tasks and/or Expected Outcomes**

Financial Specialist will:

1. Support and co-ordinate with PIU Accountant in overall accounting and financial management of the project.
2. Facilitate the International FM Consultant in developing the project FM manual (including internal control guidelines, and fixed assets management), and implement the manual.
3. Facilitate the International FM Consultant in providing training to the two PIUs.
4. Support the procurement of the accounting software system (including assets management functions) for the whole project (to be installed at both EA and IA).
5. Oversee all financial reporting activities, providing timely, accurate information to PIU, PSC, IA and EA and provide these for review by the National FM Consultant.
6. Prepare and monitor quarterly and annual project budgets and organizational budgets, update projections for the PIU, with the support by the National FM Consultant.
7. Prepare unaudited quarterly project financial statement and the unaudited annual project financial statement, with the support by the National FM Consultant.
8. Oversee cash flows, set appropriate reserve levels, and optimize cash flow requirements for the PIU.
9. Engage in annual audit, tax reporting, and ensuring compliance with all regulatory requirements for the PIU.
10. Ensure proper internal controls, identify risk areas, and prepare mitigating actions for the PIU by following the internal control guidelines developed by the International FM Consultant, and provide these reports on internal control practices for review by the National FM Consultant.
11. Coordinate with the EA and the Ministry of Finance for in-time payments under counterpart funding, including the tax reimbursement and duty exemption, with the support by the National FM Consultant.
12. Support for the MOELR's engagement with the single-contracted authority under each relevant hokimiyat for handling renovation and reconstruction of the PTCs, especially during the implementation period of the contracts.
13. Organize the fixed assets management training for the MOELR and PTCs provided by the FM Consultants and report at least annually on fixed assets management, by using the accounting software system.
14. Prepare vouchers along with the bill’s invoices and other supporting documents for PIU.
15. Enter data into financial records for payment and receipt vouchers, and maintain and organize hard files for vouchers.
16. Oversee payments process associated with staff reimbursement, travel and events as needed.
17. Maintain and record petty cash transactions.
18. Prepare bank reconciliation statements.
19. Assist in the operations of accounting, payroll, contracts and loan administration and prepare financial reports; and
20. Undertake other tasks related to financial management as deemed necessary activities.
21. **Minimal Qualification Requirements**
	* Education in commerce, accountancy, finance, economics or other relevant fields. Master degree or post-graduate degree or specific training in accountancy/finance management/audit will be an advantage;
	* General work experience in public or private or other relevant sectors at least 10 years;
	* Professional experience (at least 5 years) in/with international organizations, projects and/or organizations financed by international donors (WB, ADB, etc.);
	* Specific experience in finance management/control (at least 5 years or 2 projects);
	* Fluent in Russian and/or Uzbek communication skills (written and spoken). Good written and spoken English will be an advantage.
	* Good computer skills, all Microsoft office and accounting/financial applications.

**E. Deliverables**

1. The PIU Financial Specialist is responsible for in-time and qualitative submission of the PIU reports in compliance with the requirements of ADB and legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan, with the support by the FM consultants. These include at least the following:
2. Annual project budget plan;
3. Unaudited quarterly and annual project financial statements;
4. Project financial progress report;
5. Report on the resolution of audit issues;
6. Annual internal control report; and
7. Annual fixed assets management report.
8. Meanwhile, he/she is facilitating the in-time quality outputs from the international and national FM consultants hired under the project, and the external audit firm.
9. The PIU Financial Specialist will also support the ADB mission to prepare the following reports:
10. Periodical review reports;
11. Mid-term review report; and
12. Project completion report.

**E. Working Arrangement**

1. The PIU Financial Specialist will work at the PIU office provided by the IA at Tashkent City. Travel to regions will be required under normal circumstances with clearance from COVID-19. Under COVID-19, any travel to regions, if needed, will have to comply with the local regulations.

**F. Assignment Duration**

1. The position is full time and engagement will be for the whole planned project period. First three months will be a probation period.
1. Action Strategy for the Five Priority Areas of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2017–2021 in Presidential Decree No. 4947. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. PTCs target skill levels 2–3 benchmarked at the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). These will be made in line with the equivalent levels as in the NQF, which was developed by the government by taking reference of the EQF and other countries’ qualification framework. Training for PWDs will be held at Samarkand Bogishamol “Welcome to Job” Center; and will focus on ICT, textiles and garments (pattern design and sewing), and home appliance repair and maintenance. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The assessment centers will be accommodated at Tashkent City “Welcome to Job” Center and Samarkand Bogishamol “Welcome to Job” Center. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Professional schools target skill level 3 and *technikums* target skill level 4, benchmarked at the EQF. These will be updated to equivalent levels in line with the NQF. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The facilities include advanced equipment, and renovation and reconstruction with gender- and PWD-inclusive and energy-saving infrastructure, including alternative energy provision (solar panels). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)