**Terms of Reference and Scope of Services**

**The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit – E2E**

**Support to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development for the preparation of the Report on Referencing the NQFS to the EQF**

**Position:** Consultant (legal expert)

**Background**

The accession to the EU is one of the key priorities of the Government of Serbia and at the same time the main driver of structural reforms. Negotiations for EU acquis chapter 19 – Social Policy and Employment – and relevant Action plan concluded that Serbia is moderately prepared in the area of social policy and employment. Some progress was made in further aligning the legislation with the acquis, mainly in the area of working conditions. In the coming period, Serbia should ensure adequate financial and institutional resources for employment and social policies to more systematically target the young, women and long-term unemployed, a priority indicator of the E2E in the second phase. The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit (SIPRU), a part of the Prime Minister’s Office, will support this process of social dimension of EU accession and relevant youth employment policies.

In the previous period, the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) funds were unsuitable for developing and testing ideas for policy reforms before the wider implementation. The Government of Serbia (GoS) has invited Switzerland to support the ESRP process within the E2E main phase, as the Swiss support to the GoS reforms so far has been assessed as the very influential in the social and economic field. As Switzerland also leads the Human Resources and Social Development (HRSD) Sector Working Group, in the frame of donor coordination, and within the already established strategic partnership with SIPRU, Switzerland is well positioned to influence positively youth employment policy framework through proposed interventions. The good reputation is further supported by the excellent results of the Swiss engagement in the education reform support.

The Project “From Education to Employment – E2E“ is part of the larger E2E program launched by the *Swiss* *Agency for Development and Cooperation* (SDC) in April 2015 with the overall goal to increase decent youth employability in Serbia in a socially inclusive and sustainable way. E2E improves the position of youth on the Serbian labour market through modernization of youth employment policies and the development of young skilled labour demanded by the private sector.

The E2E program supports evidence-based approaches in the youth employment policies in Serbia. Under the lead of the SIPRU, it facilitates the policy dialogue between key national and local stakeholders. By including good practices from the 1st phase pilot regions, SIPRU advocates changes in the youth policy framework. Through NIRAS - IP, E2E creates WBL opportunities for young jobseekers from selected regions of Central Serbia. To better match private sector needs with labour supply, it cooperates with five local partners (brokers) from Novi Pazar, Knjaževac, Pirot, Kruševac and Kragujevac that facilitate the WBL programs and offer career guidance and matching services for youth and companies.

The key line ministry in charge of the implementation of the youth employment and employability policies in Serbia relevant for implementation of the E2E is the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs (MoLEVSA) with the support of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD). Line ministries were actively involved in the design and implementation of the 1st phase and the 2nd phase is continuation of the joint efforts for youth employment up to 2021.

**Introduction**

The E2E have two outcomes:

Outcome 1: Relevant national and local key stakeholders apply effective and evidence-based policies on youth employment and employability through increased performance capacities and diversified funding portfolio.

Outcome 2: Young jobseekers are better able to position themselves on the labour market through employment promotion measures and non-formal training offers required by the private sector in selected regions of Serbia.

2nd phase of E2E will contribute to employment post-2020 framework by supporting the following concrete measures:

* Legal Framework: 1) the amendments to the Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance in order to align with the Law on Planning System including institutional framework for NSCO will be revised; 2) the amendments to the Labour Law, and with an particular focus on improving the quality framework for traineeships and youth employability (Action Plan for Chapter 19);
* Strategic Framework: 1) Employment Strategy for the next multiyear period from 2021; 2) National Employment Action Plans (NEAP); 3) National Standard Classification of Occupations (NSCO);
* In line with the Law on Planning System, evaluation of the previous Employment Strategy 2011-2020 will be conducted in addition to regular NEAP reports adopted by the GoS.
* Creating evidence-based education policies based on results of market-oriented non-formal adult education and training relevant to the needs of the labour market, economy, social and personal development.

Following the adoption of the Law on NQF and the establishment of the National Agency for Qualifications and Sector Skills Councils, the framework is created to increase the supply and diversification of relevant and certified non-formal courses and accredited adult training providers, leading to nationally recognised qualifications. Also, in addressing the education shortcomings, a comprehensive competence-based curricula reform has been ongoing in the formal VET system. The introduction of the national work-based learning model in vocational education (dual education) aims to improve the relevance of education. The adoption of the Law on NQF is part of a progressive reform of the education system at all levels, including non-formal and informal learning.

Furthermore, the National Standard Classification of Occupations, that will be developed in upcoming period will be an important measure that supports institutional cooperation linking education and labour market and an efficient matching of job seekers with job vacancies in Serbia. Finally, the rulebook on standards of career guidance and counselling services has been officially adopted by the MoESTD in June 2019, whereas the standards will be used by and relevant also to the MYS and MoLEVSA.

These recent reform progresses are considered as driving forces for the development of a functioning non-formal training market. The SDC supports the VET reform through its Policy VET project, whereas the E2E addresses the reform of the non-formal training sector. E2E will make its contribution to make use of this framework by building capacities of relevant stakeholders, the development of occupational standards and the accreditation of trainings in those occupations that industries with growth potential need the most. The planning process has shown the interest of the MoESTD in further developing occupations in the interest of the private sector; above that, the experiences of the 1st phase of E2E indicate a certain commitment to invest human resources to contribute to the development of occupational profiles and work-based trainings.

Referencing the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Serbia (hereinafter: NQFS) to the European Qualifications Framework (hereinafter: EQF) is part of the reform processes defined in positive regulations and numerous strategic documents. Thus, the provisions of Article 23 of the Law on the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Serbia (“RS Official Gazette” No. 27/18) stipulate that the Ministry shall reference the NQFS to the EQF and perform the tasks of the National Coordination Point. The Strategy for Education Development in Serbia 2020 ("RS Official Gazette", No. 107/2012) defines four long-term goals that are closely related to the establishment of the NQFS system. The Economic Reform Program 2019-2021 envisages the implementation of numerous activities aimed at establishing and implementing the NQFS, such as: preparing reports on the referencing the NQFS to the EQF, establishing the NQFS Register and system for validation of non-formal education and informal learning. The Action Plan for the Implementation of the Program of the Government of the Republic of Serbia defines as one of the priority goals the implementation of the NQFS system, that is, referencing the NQFS to the EQF, which ensures easier recognition and comparability of qualifications acquired in Serbia with qualifications acquired in other countries.

In order to create the best conditions for establishing mutual trust between countries that have developed their Qualifications Frameworks and that are referencing to the EQF, the European Parliament and the EQF Lifelong Learning Council have recommended criteria and procedures for referencing the national qualifications levels to the EQF. The liaison process is carried out through the preparation of the Report on referencing the NQFS to the EQF. The purpose of the Report is to present to other countries the way in which the Republic of Serbia has aligned its qualification levels with the EQF and how it has ensured that the relevant procedures and criteria for integration are fulfilled.

The Report on Referencing National Qualifications Framework of Serbia to the European Qualifications Framework was adopted at the 52nd EQF Advisory Group meeting held on 4th and 5th February 2020 in Brussels, along with the supplementary Report on Self-Certification of NQFS in the field of higher education to the Qualifications Framework in the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA), as part of the EU accession process and as one of the objectives of the national strategic documents. The Report was prepared in line with the criteria and procedures set forth by the EQF Advisory Group and presents a result of numerous expert and consultancy meetings held with the national and EU partners. Through the adoption of the Report on Referencing the NQFS to the EQF, the qualifications framework of the Republic of Serbia has been referenced to the European Qualifications Framework, meaning that a clear and transparent relationship has been established between eight qualification levels in Serbia and eight qualification levels of the European Qualifications Framework.

Also, at the 52nd meeting of the Advisory Group, it was recommended that certain topics be further clarified within the Report on Referencing the NQFS to the EQF, and that the final version of the Report on Referencing the NQFS to the EQF should be placed on the portal of the European Commission.

Bearing in mind that E2E has supported the preparation of the Report on referencing of the NQFS to the EQF within the 1st phase of the project, the SIPRU will support the activities on further clarification and preparation of the final version of the Report within the E2E 2nd phase, through the engagement of consultant to provide services.

**Scope of Work and Tasks**

Selected consultant shall provide services in order to support and enable further development of the NQF and process of referencing the NQFS to the EQF, which will enable development of the integrated NQF system and alignment of educational outcomes with the labour market needs.

The selected consultant is expected to fulfil the following tasks:

1. Finalization of the Report on Referencing the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Serbia to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and Self-certification to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (hereinafter: The Report on Referencing) in English in accordance with the recommendations of the EQF Advisory Group (EQF AG) and RS legal norms;
2. Translation of the final version of The Report on Referencing from English into Serbian, respecting the terminology used in the normative acts of the Republic of Serbia;
3. Presentation of the final Report on Referencing to the relevant institutions and bodies in the Republic of Serbia, at the invitation of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development;
4. Supporting and participating in promotional activities related to the implementation of the NQFS system.

**Responsibilities**

The selected consultant is responsible for the tasks listed by this ToR to the SIPRU Deputy Manager and MoESTED Head of Dual Education Group and National Qualifications Framework. All tasks will be undertaken in close collaboration with the MoESTED.

**Consultant Requirements**

* Level 7.1 NQFS in the field of law sciences;
* Experience in preparation of the reports on referencing the EQF;
* The knowledge related to strategic documents and the national legislation for all education levels such as Law on Foundations of the Education System, Law on Preschool Education, Law on Primary Education, Law on Secondary Education, Law on Dual Education, Law on Textbooks, Law on the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Serbia (NQF), Law on Higher Education, Standards and the Amendments of the Standards for Accreditation of a Higher Education Institution, and the subordinate legislations;
* Experience in consultancy and advisory work, in areas related to the project would be considered as an advantage;
* Conducted studies, researches or projects related to this project would be considered as an advantage;
* 8 years of relevant work experience on preparation of laws and subordinate legislations in the area of pre-university and higher education, the national qualification framework, with relating analysis of regulation effect;
* Excellent verbal and writing communication skills in English.

**Reporting**

The date of submission of the *Inception Reports* must be produced 15 days from the commencement of the implementation.

*First report* – Final Report on Referencing the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Serbia to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and Self-certification to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area in English language technically arranged and ready for print, must be submitted no later than July 31st, 2020;

*Second report* – Final Report on referencing the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Serbia to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and Self-certification to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area in Serbian language technically arranged and ready for print, must be submitted no later than December 31st, 2020;

## Duration of the Assignment

The contract shall cover period between 1st May 2020 and 31st December 2020.