

TERMS OF REFERENCE

for Consulting Services (Individual Consultant)

"Developing Communication Strategy on Transforming the Higher Education"

Contract No. MOES-C1-COM-01

Ukraine Improving Higher Education for Results Project

World Bank Loan No. 9238-UA

I. BACKGROUND

Project

Ukraine and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD; the World Bank) have signed Loan Agreement No. 9238-UA in the amount of US\$200 million for the Project 'Ukraine: Improving Higher Education for Results' (hereinafter referred to as the Project). The Project is implemented in Ukraine by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (MoES) with the support of the World Bank Group. The Project implementation period is 2021-2026.

The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to improve efficiency, conditions for quality, and transparency in the higher education system of Ukraine.

The Project includes six Parts:

- Part 1: Sector-Wide Improvements to Governance, Financing, Quality, and Transparency;
- Part 2: Alliances/Partnerships for Improved Efficiency and Quality;
- Part 3: Capacity Building and Education Environment Enhancement;
- Part 4: Project Management, Monitoring & Evaluation
- Part 5: Support to Academic Scholarships under MOES and Social Scholarships under MOSP for Higher Education Students
- Part 6: Contingent Emergency Response (CERC)

The Project supports two categories of expenditures: (i) traditional investments in goods, works, and services, for which disbursements are made against eligible expenditures, and (ii) defined performance-based conditions (PBCs), for which disbursements are also made against eligible expenditures conditional on the achievement of the PBCs as defined in the Loan Agreement and Project Operational Manual.

More detailed information is given at the link

<https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P171050>

National context

The full-scale invasion of Russia into Ukraine in February 2022 has substantially disrupted the Ukrainian higher education sector and posed multiple challenges. Among them were ensuring the displaced universities have the necessary resources to continue their educational and scientific activities, creating safe conditions for offline learning - building bomb shelters, enhancing the quality of teaching disciplines in English, and strengthening the innovative capabilities of Ukrainian higher education institutions.

Yet, MoES aims to continue transforming higher education within the reform envisioned in the Strategy for Development of Higher Education in Ukraine 2022-2032¹². Current challenges encompass, i.e.:

- non-compliance between HEIs network and modern society development requirements,
- lack of legal framework and economic incentives for university-business collaboration, and
- ineffective management and utilization of resources in the higher education system, insufficient demonstration of social responsibility, and limited autonomy of higher education institutions.

As set in the Vision on Education and Science of Ukraine³ and recently published Strategic Action Plan of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine until 2027⁴, these specific predicaments are expected to be eliminated by reaching the strategic objectives of the transformation of higher education.

The primary focus of reform is overhauling higher education financing, specifically financing of students. Instead of the outdated Soviet system, where the state allocates funds to universities for each student they graduate, a new grant system will be introduced. Under this system, students will receive grants directly from the state. This change aims to provide financial support to more higher education students and foster competition among universities for prospective students.

Another key area is enhancing universities' autonomy and flexibility. The plan is to develop university management capacities to handle greater independence, aligning more with European standards of university governance. This includes empowering university supervisory boards, involving business leaders in decision-making, and ensuring universities' strategies align with academic and societal needs.

The reform also seeks to transform the student and academic experience in higher education. The rigid, specialized programming will be replaced with individual learning pathways at all universities, allowing students more freedom to tailor their studies to their personal interests and circumstances.

Finally, the Ministry of Education and Science is working on improving the higher education infrastructure. This involves merging universities to create larger, high-quality research and interdisciplinary teaching centers. The mergers will also improve educational, scientific, and laboratory facilities.

Communication context

The lack of a cohesive communication strategy and a detailed action plan led to ineffective dissemination of information about educational reforms. This caused misunderstandings about the expected outcomes of these reforms, negatively affecting the implementation process. To address these issues, a new communication strategy shall be developed that focuses on educational advancements and forthcoming policy changes. This strategy should deliver clear, targeted messages to various stakeholders to prevent confusion and shape a positive understanding of the reforms.

¹ <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/286-2022-%D1%80#Text>

² Development of the strategy is at final stages

³ <https://mon.gov.ua/ua/viziya>

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This new communication strategy should be aligned with the recently unveiled Strategic Plan for Education in Ukraine, supporting its primary goals. It needs to engage a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including education professionals, the private sector, government officials, parents, youth, and the general public. The aim is to actively involve them in the reform process and advocate for the proposed changes.

Moreover, the communication strategy should not only focus on promoting public engagement and support for higher education transformation but also consider the links of higher education with basic education and labour market. This comprehensive approach is essential for fostering a supportive environment for the transformation of the higher education system in Ukraine. The Project design includes the communication component, which enables support of the MoES to build a comprehensive communication and outreach campaign for the transformation of higher education.

Now, the MoES is looking for an experienced consultant to develop the communication strategy and action plan, which will be a basis for a further full-scale communication campaign.

The Consultant will be contracted through competitive selection following the Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers, November 2020. These Terms of References define the purpose, scope, and duration of consulting services and the qualification requirements for the Consultant.

II. OBJECTIVE

This assignment aims to develop a comprehensive communication strategy based on the community response and needs of the higher education transformation. Completing this assignment will enable MoES to conduct a quality communication campaign to foster an understanding of the higher education system.

III. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The Scope of services to be provided by the Consultant shall complete the following key directions and include but is not limited to:

Strategy Development

- Situational Analysis: Organization and control of the national-level surveys, focus groups, and interviews to understand stakeholder perceptions, information gaps, and communication channels' effectiveness. Analyze existing data and research to inform the strategy.
- Target Audience Identification: Identify and prioritize stakeholders based on their influence, interests, and needs. Develop personas for each group to guide tailored communication strategies.
- Key Messages Development: Craft clear, concise, and compelling messages that articulate the reform's benefits and address potential concerns and misconceptions. Tailor messages for different audiences based on their values, concerns, and information consumption habits.

Action Plan

- Communication Activities and Channels: Design a mix of activities (workshops, seminars, social media campaigns, etc.) and channels (traditional media, online platforms, direct communications, etc.) suited to each audience. Consider innovative and interactive methods to engage stakeholders effectively.

- **Content Calendar and Management:** Develop a detailed content creation and distribution schedule, ensuring consistent and timely communication. Include major educational events, milestones, and public holidays to leverage timely opportunities.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Set up qualitative and quantitative metrics to track progress and evaluate the impact of communication efforts. These might include engagement rates, sentiment analysis, stakeholder feedback, and changes in public perception.

Capacity Building

- **Training Programs:** Develop and deliver training sessions for MoES staff and key stakeholders on effective communication skills, engagement strategies, and messaging consistency.

IV. DELIVERABLES

Deliverable 1. Survey Report: The document will encompass the analysis of the surveys and research and main findings.

Deliverable 2. Comprehensive Strategy Document: This central document should encapsulate the communication strategy's rationale, objectives, key messages, target audiences, and detailed action plan with monitoring indicators.

All deliverables shall be provided to the Client in draft form for comments. The Client will provide his comments within 10 working days, and the Consultant will address the comments within 5 working days in the Final version.

The MoES and the Consultant shall agree upon all forms of the reports.

The language of the reports is Ukrainian and English. The deliverables shall be provided in 2 hard copies and editable and PDF format.

The payment will be executed based on the acceptance certificate signed between the MoES and the Client in the following manner

No	Deliverable	Period (from commencement)	Payment
1	Deliverable 1. Survey Report	Not later than 1,5 months	25%
2	Deliverable 2. Comprehensive Strategy Document	Not later than 2,5 months	75%

V. REPORTING

The Consultant will report to the Project Coordinator, Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine responsible for Higher education and Project Manager – Lead of group of consultants, and act under the supervision of Project Coordinator(s), the Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine responsible for higher education and Project manager – Lead of group of consultants and work closely together with the Specialist in Communication Issues and Information Coverage.

VI. PROVIDED RESOURCES

MoES shall provide the Consultant with the information necessary to carry out his/her assignment in a timely manner.

VII. QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Minimum requirements (mandatory):

- At least a master's degree or a similar complete higher education degree.
- At least 5 years of work experience as a specialist in communication or PR.
- Experience in developing at least 3 communication strategies at the national level.
- Fluency in English and Ukrainian;
- An advanced PC user with knowledge and practical skills in using Microsoft Office (MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint) packages, email, and databases.

Desirable qualifications and competencies which provide the advantage

- Work experience in projects financed by donors or international organizations;
- Experience in projects related to higher education/research;
- Practical knowledge of the current state of higher education in Ukraine.

The MoES may invite the best-qualified candidates to an interview to clarify information provided in the respective CVs.

VIII. MODALITIES OF THE CONTRACT

The contract duration is 2,5 months starting from the commencement date, which is the date of the contract signing. The Consultant is responsible for the quality of deliverables.

Particular contract modalities are subject to negotiations.

IX. APPLICATION PACKAGE

Interested persons should submit their CVs in Ukrainian and English at the following email address: uiherp@mon.gov.ua Cc: serhiy.artemenko@uiherp.org and oleksandr.radchenko@uiherp.org indicating the email subject: «P171050: Developing Communication Strategy on Transforming the Higher Education: [NAME]».

The deadline for submission of the documents is 11:00 AM local time on May 14, 2024.

If the Consultant fails to provide CVs in both languages, the Client reserves the right to reject the Consultant's application.