

TERMS OF REFERENCE
for Consulting Services (Individual Consultant)

Deputy Head of Early Childhood Education Development Office
(Cross-Sectoral Coordination)

LEARN-IC-ECEDO-02
Lifting Education Access and Resilience in Times of Need in Ukraine Program
URTF Grant No. TF0C5794

I. Background

The Government of Ukraine is implementing a comprehensive reform of the education sector aimed at strengthening teaching and learning conditions and enhancing management capacities across all levels of education. The Government are also implementing transformational new Early Childhood and Preschool Education (ECPE) reforms – key to the EU accession, approved after the Program became effective. These reforms aim to deregulate the rigid preschool sector and promote a play-based, child-centered pedagogy consistent with the global evidence base. Implementing the new Preschool Law is a key action for Ukraine's EU accession under Chapter 26 of the 2024 EU Enlargement Report and is now being operationalized through “First Steps Forward: Strategic Framework for Early Childhood and Preschool Education (ECPE) in Ukraine,” new decrees (regulatory acts) and additional budget allocations. These reforms, which are the most transformative in over three decades—will be implemented in a two-phased approach. The first phase involves developing the capacity on the national and local levels to implement reforms on a small scale (approx. 35 hromadas) together with a rigorous process evaluation to inform scale-up. The second phase will involve implementing the “First Steps Forward Strategy” at a national level. In addition, with ECPE as a priority under SAP and a key policy action under the National Demographic Strategy. To support this reform agenda, approved after LEARN became effective, the government requested additional resources be allocated to the Technical Assistance (TA) (Investment Project Financing - IPF) component of LEARN to support the first phase of the ECPE reform before moving to new disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs).

Central to this effort is the World Bank–supported (Lifting Education Access and Resilience in Times of Need in Ukraine) LEARN Operation, which advances the State Education Sector Development Strategy, New Ukrainian School (NUS) and Early Childhood Education reform.

The objectives of the Operation are: to (i) improve teaching and learning conditions; and (ii) strengthen the management capacity of the education system. The Operation’s total financing is US\$451 million using a combination of the World Bank's financial instruments: Program-for-Results (PforR) complemented by Investment Project Financing (IPF).

US\$31.1 million in Additional Financing was recently approved through grant resources, consisting of US\$30.0 million from the Ukraine Relief, Recovery, Reconstruction, and Reform Multi-Donor Trust Fund and US\$1.1 million from the Global Partnership for Education Fund. This additional financing is formalized under the Grant Agreement between Ukraine and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Development Association, jointly acting as a Supervising Entity for the Global Partnership for Education Fund and as administrator of the Ukraine Relief, Recovery, Reconstruction, and Reform Multi-Donor Trust Fund (URTF GRANT

NUMBER TF0D0612; GPE GRANT NUMBER TF0D0613), and supports activities related to the continued implementation of the Program.

The Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) has established the Early Childhood Education Development Office (ECEDO). Operating as a technical implementation office within the Ministry, ECEDO delivers operational and technical support for coordinating overall reform activities across several areas, including access and financing, curriculum and teacher professional development, inclusion, quality assurance, legal and regulatory frameworks, and cross-sectoral collaboration. It will also be responsible for overseeing LEARN ECPE activities. The creation of ECEDO strengthens MoES's ability to manage donor-funded technical assistance, provide support to participating hromadas, ensure alignment across reform components, and integrate project outcomes into national systems to promote long-term sustainability and scalability.

II. Objectives

The objective of this assignment is to support the Head of ECEDO in ensuring effective cross-sectoral coordination, operational coherence, and results-oriented implementation of the First Steps Forward project. The Deputy Head will strengthen coordination across ECEDO pillars, MoES directorates, and development partners, while supporting efficient planning, resource use, and national-level scalability of interventions.

III. Scope of Work

1. Cross-Sectoral and Pillar Coordination

- Coordinate day-to-day interaction across ECEDO technical pillars—Access & Financing, Inclusion/MHPSS, Legal & Normative, and MEL/QA (funded by the World Bank Group), as well as Content & Teacher Professional Development (funded by UNICEF)—ensuring effective alignment and collaboration across all streams within the overall ECEDO framework.
- Ensure consistency and alignment of activities, timelines, and deliverables across pillars.
- Support resolution of cross-pillar dependencies, overlaps, or implementation bottlenecks.

2. Operational Planning and Implementation Support

- Support preparation, consolidation, and monitoring of ECEDO annual and quarterly workplans.
- Track implementation progress against agreed milestones and flag risks or delays to the Head of ECEDO.
- Support coordination of procurement planning, consultant mobilization, and sequencing of technical assistance activities in line with LEARN IPF requirements.

3. Coordination with MoES and Key Institutions

- Serve as a coordination focal point between ECEDO and MoES directorates, including the General Directorate for Preschool and Inclusive Education and other relevant units.
- Support alignment between ECEDO activities and MoES internal processes, decision-making timelines, and policy priorities.
- Facilitate coordination with regional and local authorities (hromadas) where cross-sectoral engagement is required.

4. Development Partner and Donor Coordination

- Ensure a coherent approach to quality and access across various stakeholders consistent with new Preschool Law and associated regulatory acts
- Support structured coordination with World Bank Group, UNICEF and other development partners engaged in ECPE reform, ensuring close collaboration and coherence in approaches, roles, and joint planning processes so that all teams work in a well-aligned and complementary manner.
- Ensure complementarity of technical assistance and avoid duplication across partner-supported activities.
- Contribute to donor coordination meetings, briefings, and information sharing as requested by the Head of ECEDO.

5. Results Monitoring, Risk Management, and Quality Support

- Support the Head of ECEDO in monitoring overall project progress, risks, and implementation challenges.
- Coordinate with the MEL/QA experts to ensure monitoring frameworks are applied consistently across pillars.
- Support follow-up on recommendations emerging from monitoring, evaluations, and implementation reviews.

6. Reporting and Documentation

- Contribute to preparation of consolidated monthly progress reports and inputs to donor reporting under LEARN.
- Ensure timely collection of inputs from ECEDO pillars and technical experts.
- Maintain clear documentation of coordination decisions, action points, and follow-up.

7. Support to Sustainability and Scale-Up

- Support integration of ECEDO tools, coordination mechanisms, and procedures into MoES systems.
- Ensure that project-supported coordination models and processes are designed for national-level scalability beyond the First Steps Forward project.

IV. Reporting and Coordination Arrangements

- The Deputy Head reports directly to the Head of ECEDO.
- The position maintains a dotted-line coordination role with the Line Deputy Minister responsible for Preschool Education and relevant MoES directorates.
- For operational and fiduciary matters, the Deputy Head works in coordination with the World Bank Operations Management Unit (Project Implementing Unit).
- The Consultant contributes to monthly reporting and coordination meetings as requested.

V. Duration and Modality of Assignment

- The Consultant shall provide his/her services until December 31, 2028.
- The Consultant is expected to provide services primarily remotely; however, upon MoES request, must be able to work from MoES premises and travel within Ukraine as needed.

VI. Language Requirements

- Fluency in Ukrainian and working level of English are required.

VII. Provided Resources

- The Consultant shall provide services on a full-time basis.
- The Consultant is expected to undertake business trips to regions of Ukraine to support coordination and implementation of project activities.

VIII. Minimum Qualification Requirements

- Master's degree or higher in Education, Public Administration, Economics, Management, Social Policy, or a related field.
- Minimum 2 years of experience coordinating or managing large-scale programs or reforms within government or international development contexts.
- Proven experience in cross-sectoral coordination, particularly across education, finance, health, social protection, and regional governance.
- Experience in resource planning, procurement coordination, and compliance with government and donor procedures.
- Solid understanding of early childhood education policy, decentralization, and governance in Ukraine.
- Experience working with the World Bank, UNICEF, or comparable development partners.
- Demonstrated ability to coordinate multi-disciplinary teams and ensure alignment across technical pillars.

IX. Desirable Skills and Qualifications

- Experience in project cycle management, including planning, budgeting, procurement monitoring, and risk management.
- Knowledge of results-based management, monitoring and evaluation, and donor reporting.
- Experience supporting multi-stakeholder or inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms.
- Familiarity with public administration reform and donor coordination in Ukraine.
- Strong analytical, communication, and problem-solving skills.

X. Application Package

Interested persons should submit their CVs in Ukrainian and English to the following email address: oleksandr.radchenko@uiherp.org. Please indicate the email subject line as: «LEARN: Selection of the Deputy Head of ECEDO: [NAME]»

The deadline for submission of documents is 11:00 am Kyiv time, March 12, 2026.

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