

TERMS OF REFERENCE

for Consulting Services (Consultant)

Specialist in Innovation Policy Implementation and Institutional Capacity Development for Supporting the Innovation Ecosystem

Procurement No MOES-C3-05-SUP-IC-18

Ukraine Improving Higher Education for Results Project

World Bank Loan No. 9238-UA

I. BACKGROUND

Ukraine and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD; the Bank; the World Bank) signed Loan Agreement No. 9238-UA in the amount of USD 200 million for the project “Ukraine Improving Higher Education for Results” (hereinafter 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 implementation period is 2021–2026.

The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to improve efficiency, enhance conditions for quality assurance, and strengthen transparency in Ukraine’s higher education system.

The Project consists of six components:

Component 1: Sector-wide improvements in governance, financing, quality, and transparency;

Component 2: Consolidation and partnerships to improve efficiency and quality;

Component 3: Capacity building and improvement of the learning environment;

Component 4: Project management, monitoring, and evaluation;

Component 5: Support for academic and social scholarships for higher education students;

Component 6: Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC).

The Project will finance two categories of expenditures:

- (i) investments in goods, works, and services, reimbursed according to eligible expenditures;
- (ii) budget transfers under disbursement-linked indicators, reimbursed according to eligible expenditures subject to achievement of specific results defined in the Loan Agreement and the Project Operational Manual.

More detailed information is available at the link:

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

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation in 2022 exacerbated long-standing underinvestment in research and development, damaged infrastructure, and weakened human capital. The rising importance of human capital in the modern economy is largely driven by the emergence of the knowledge economy, where knowledge, skills, and talent play a key role in creating value and increasing product competitiveness.

The education system is therefore an integral part of Ukraine's science and innovation ecosystem. Higher education institutions (HEIs) must become key elements of the national innovation system. They should serve as centres of scientific and technological progress, stimulate innovation, play a key role in industrial clusters, and directly influence economic productivity and innovativeness through continuous interaction and effective cooperation with enterprises.

The Higher Education Development Strategy of Ukraine for 2022–2032 and the MoES Strategic Action Plan until 2027 face several challenges: inefficient use of financial resources, a gap between higher education and labour market needs, lack of feedback mechanisms between employers and HEIs, inconsistent institutional autonomy, reluctance of many institutions to use opportunities provided by legislation, low public trust in HEIs, low trust in innovation activities within HEIs, insufficient practice and experience in digital technologies, and reluctance to conduct applied research or create innovative intellectual products for the economy.

As a result, only six Ukrainian HEIs were included in the top-1000 universities globally according to the QS World University Rankings 2023.

Component 3 of the Project “Ukraine Improving Higher Education for Results” aims to support HEIs in improving their learning and research environment, contributing to the development of HEI startup ecosystems and fostering successful university-business cooperation.

In line with Component 3 objectives, the MoES seeks a consultant to support innovation ecosystem development and the STI sector in Ukraine. The MoES also aims to strengthen the innovation capacity of Ukrainian HEIs by identifying gaps and opportunities for ecosystem development, promoting international cooperation and partnerships, leveraging opportunities provided by international partners, and developing innovation infrastructure to support higher education reforms.

The Consultant will be selected through a competitive procedure in accordance with the Procurement Regulations for Borrowers under Investment Project Financing (7th edition, September 2025). This Terms of Reference defines the purpose, scope, duration of consulting services, and the qualification requirements for the Consultant.

II. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this assignment is to support the MoES in developing and implementing policies for the innovation ecosystem, strengthening the link between educational processes and innovation, and improving conditions for higher education.

Provision of expert advisory support to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and higher education institutions on effective tools, models, and approaches for building and scaling the innovation ecosystem through active integration into international networks and partnerships, with a particular focus on fostering open innovation, digital platforms, collaboration with global hubs, and the development of innovation infrastructure (laboratories, startup hubs, research clusters) in line with international best practices.

III. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The Consultant shall provide the following services and perform, but not be limited to, the tasks below:

- Support to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine in implementing a pilot project to create research centers of excellence based on HEIs, including project support and provision of consulting support on procurement issues, implementation of topics, involvement of partners, and monitoring of KPI achievement.
- Support to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine in scaling up the network of startup schools, incubators, and accelerators based on higher education institutions and scientific institutions after the completion of a pilot project.
- Support to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine in identifying opportunities for the development of innovation infrastructure, including science parks and their interaction with higher education institutions.
- Support to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine in finalizing the second reading of the draft law "On Support and Development of Innovation Activity".
- Support to the Ministry of Education and Science in implementing the provisions of the draft law "On Support and Development of Innovation Activity" after its adoption.
- Preparing regulatory legal acts and preparing the launch of projects aimed at supporting and developing knowledge-intensive innovations (programs to support innovation infrastructure, introduction of innovation vouchers).
- Providing expert advice to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine on effective tools, models and approaches to building and scaling an innovation ecosystem through active integration into international networks and partnerships, in particular with an emphasis on the concept of open innovation, digital platforms, and the development of innovation infrastructure in accordance with best global practices.
- Support to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine in facilitating connections between HEIs and business to create innovations through financial, infrastructure and digital tools.

- Preparing materials for information campaigns aimed at disseminating information about available opportunities and best practices for using international innovation support programs.
- Supporting the MoES in stimulating the participation of Ukrainian stakeholders in Horizon Europe, COST programs, including providing recommendations for scaling participation, conducting informational events, and offering consultations.
- Supporting the MoES in the process of Euro-Atlantic integration in the field of innovation and creating conditions for integration into the European Research and Innovation Area.
- Preparing an updated version of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for the Development of the Innovation Sector for the Period Until 2030.
- Conducting informational and consultation activities for HEIs and research institutions on enhancing technology transfer, developing the network of technology transfer centers, and improving systems for commercializing scientific results generated by students and researchers.
- Performing other tasks and activities related to project implementation within the Consultant's competence, as requested by the Project Coordinator(s), the Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine responsible for science and innovation, and the Project Manager – Head of the Consultant Team.

IV. REPORTING

The Consultant shall report to the Project Coordinator, the Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine responsible for science and innovation, and the Project Manager – Head of the Consultant Team.

The Consultant shall submit monthly written reports. Reports must describe the services delivered during the reporting period.

V. PROVIDED RESOURCES

The MoES shall provide the Consultant with information required for timely performance of the assignment.

VI. QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Minimum (mandatory) requirements:

- At least a Master's degree or equivalent higher education in a field of "Business, Administration and Law", "Social Sciences, Journalism, Information and International Relations", "Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics", "Information Technology", "Engineering, Production and Construction";
- At least 5 years of professional experience in higher education or STI-related sectors;
- Fluency in English;

- Fluency in Ukrainian;
- Advanced computer literacy, practical skills with Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), email, and databases.

Desirable qualifications and competencies:

- Experience cooperating with Ukrainian and international government bodies and NGOs;
- Experience working on donor-funded or international organization projects;
- Experience in project management, including in the science, technology and innovation sector;
- Experience in higher education / research projects;
- Practical knowledge of the current state of higher education and the innovation ecosystem in Ukraine;
- Practical knowledge of regulatory design, financial planning and reporting, and public procurement.

The MoES may invite shortlisted candidates for interviews to clarify information provided in their CVs.

VII. PERIOD AND PLACE OF WORK

The Consultant shall provide services until 31 December 2026, with the possibility of contract extension.

The Consultant is expected to work full-time. The actual scope of services will be agreed upon between the Client and the Consultant. Services are expected to be provided in Kyiv, Ukraine. The Consultant may work remotely but must be able to promptly arrive and/or provide services on site at the Client's premises or another location designated by the Client when requested.

VIII. APPLICATION PACKAGE

Interested persons should submit their CVs in Ukrainian and English to the following email address: oleksandr.radchenko@uiherp.org and indicating the email subject: «P171050: MOES-C3-05-SUP-IC-18: [NAME]».

The deadline for submission of the documents is 11:00 AM local time on May 1, 2026.

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