

## **Term of Reference**

### **Consultant to develop a concept paper for the establishment of a National Research Council**

#### **Background**

Research and innovation have been a contributing factor in attaining vital economic growth in developed nations. Credible and reliable data are essential to ensure national planning and development is evidence-based. Yet, research and innovation remains one of the most underdeveloped areas in the country. Shortage of sufficient funding opportunities, well equipped research facilities and qualified researchers have all contributed negatively to the progress of research as a field. There is also no efficient mechanism to monitor and organize research opportunities and funding.

The Ministry of Higher Education, Government of Maldives (GOM) has proposed to establish a National Research Council that will promote research activities and prioritize, monitor and allocate funding for research, based on national needs. A more inclusive and equitable mechanism is required to allocate research funds to both public and private institutions. Such funding should be allocated via a competitive process that is transparent, effective and accountable. In providing research funding, it is important to carefully select projects that have the highest potential to make a difference in economic and social development. The Research Council will also be responsible for the dissemination of research findings and encourage data driven decision making and policy planning across Maldives.

#### **Objective**

The objective of this assignment is to develop a streamlined structure and scope for the Research Council.

#### **Scope of Services**

1. The GOM wishes to establish the National Research Council by mid 2020, and it is expected the work of the Council will commence by end of 2020.
2. The project will be headed by a Steering Committee chaired by the Minister of Higher Education or any other official assigned by the Ministry of Higher Education. The consultant will receive policy directions from the Steering Committee and develop the guidelines for the functioning and establishment of the National Research Council.
3. The tasks will include, but will not be limited to, the following:
  - Propose a design and process of preparing the National Research Council guidelines.
  - Propose a structure for the National Research Council.
  - Prepare timeline with goals for each stage.

- Prepare budgetary estimated for Research Council setup and its operations for 3 (three) year.
- Identify possible funding avenues.
- Identify prospective partners.
- Prepare questionnaire and documents needed for stakeholder consultations and workshops.
- Conduct stakeholder consultations during the process.
- During consultation meetings, identify priority areas of research.
- Prepare guidelines for call for proposals and evaluation of proposals.
- Prepare guidelines for awarding research funding.
- Prepare guidelines for establishing a sustainable funding mechanism.
- Prepare a code of ethics.
- Draft reports for interim meetings with the Steering Committee.
- Prepare final guideline for the functioning and establishment of the National Research Council

#### 4. Other contractual and financial details.

#### **Required Qualifications and Experience**

In order to successfully carry out the tasks listed above, the consultant is required to have the following qualifications and experience:

- At least a Master Degree in Research, Law, Policy Planning, Education, Project Management and Development, or a relevant discipline;
- At least 5 years of experience in policy planning and project management;
- Extensive experience in Higher Education;
- Experience working with different government units and agencies, and familiarity with relevant government procedures and regulations;
- Experience working with different Higher Education Institutes, and familiarity with relevant government procedures and regulations;

#### **Other Competencies**

In addition to the required qualifications and experience, consultant will have the following competencies:

- Strong organization, co-ordination and teamwork skills.
- Strong client orientation and skills in promoting stakeholders' participation in the project.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills in English, and the ability to prepare high quality documents in English.
- Proficiency in the use of MS Office, basic statistical software, email and the internet.

#### **Institutional Arrangements**

Consultant will work at a place as agreed by both parties.

**Duration of services and terms of payment**

The service is for a period of 6 (six) weeks. The consultant will be hired as a specialist/consultant under the project and will be paid in accordance with the agreed rate upon completion of the outputs specified in the TOR and the contract.