

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ



MALDIVES: ENHANCING EMPLOYABILITY AND RESILIENCE OF YOUTH PROJECT (MEERY: P163818)

Ministry of Higher Education
Republic of Maldives

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND SCOPE OF SERVICES

FOR

Consultant to review the Maldives National Qualifications Framework (MNQF) and to align with National Skills Development Master Plan

(Procurement Ref: MV-MOHE-210155-CS-INDV)

1. Background

Several aspects of the Maldives' recent development pattern highlight imbalances between labor demand and supply. Public sector jobs are predominantly in the civil service with the rapid expansion of cadres in the 1990s and 2000s. However, with the increasing standard of living over time, the labor market has become more challenging for Maldivians in general. Increasing educational attainment among the younger generation and expectations have coincided/collided with the rapid growth in low-skill service jobs associated with tourism and construction, leading to a mismatch in skills supply and demand. Despite the high levels of growth and labor market conditions in public investments, tourism, fisheries and non-tradable tourism related activities, important challenges remain for young Maldivians. These relate to (i) the need for greater inclusion and productive employment for youth, especially for those who cannot rely on public sector jobs (because of a sharp reduction of public sector employment) or who are from the most vulnerable segments of the population; and (ii) an increasing reliance on foreign labor in important sectors such as tourism and construction services and limited opportunities for women.

The Government of Maldives (GoM) is implementing the “Maldives: Enhancing Employability and Resilience of Youth (MEERY)” Project. The project is funded by the World Bank. The objective of the project is to improve the relevance of technical and vocational skills and foster entrepreneurship to promote youth employment in priority sectors. The project is being administered by the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), with a Project Steering Committee that is co-chaired by the MoHE and the Ministry of Economic Development.

The project comprises three components and a Contingent Emergency Component. The three primary components are;

Component 1: **Fostering skills development and entrepreneurship in priority sectors (Tourism & Construction and ICT-related Services Sectors through four sub-components:**

- 1.1: Labor-market assessment and analysis for demand driven skills identification*
- 1.2: Revision of Skills Development (TVET and Entrepreneurship) Curriculum*
- 1.3: Face-to-Face Skills Delivery.*
- 1.4: Support for Entrepreneurship Development.*

Component 2: Promoting entrepreneurship and employment through skills Development and eLearning Strategy through three sub-components:

- 2.1: Strategy Development, Strengthening and Diversifying skills development programs.*
- 2.2: IT infrastructure for skills development and jobs platform.*
- 2.3: Career hubs for education-industry linkages.*

Component 3: Project Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation

2. Objective of the Assignment

Revising developed standards regularly is a world-wide best practice seen in developed countries. Often as developments and changes occur across a spectrum of areas, existing standards at the Maldives Qualifications Authority, requires revisions and amendments to fit the surrounding changes. This TOR is for a comprehensive revision of the Maldives National Qualifications Framework (MNQF).

MNQF was first developed and introduced in September, 2001. It was revised in 2009 and was enforced in 2011 with major amendments changing from a time-based qualifications framework to a competency-based qualifications framework. With these amendments, each qualification fits into a level from 1 to 10. MNQF sets minimum standards for qualifications from Certificate 1 at Level 1 up to the Doctoral degree at Level 10. Again, MNQF was again amended in 2017.

Due to the changing landscape of higher education provision, coupled with internationalization and expansion of cross-border higher education, minimum requirements of some qualifications as well as minimum standards related to the provision of qualifications need to be clearly set and defined to address emerging quality issues.

- A comprehensive revision of the Maldives National Qualifications Framework with a focus on identifying gaps and loopholes.
- Amend the MNQF with clearer definitions and standards for terms and processes related to the provision of MNQF qualifications including but not limited to the following:
 - a. credits,
 - b. duration,
 - c. contact hours,

- d. learning hours,
 - e. semester,
 - f. language of instruction,
 - g. delivery modality (face-to-face, distance learning, Open learning, E-learning),
 - h. study mode (full-time, part-time),
 - i. recognition of prior learning.
- Strengthen MNQF to incorporate additional provisions for skills development and skills training– if any.

3. Scope of Services

The overall responsibility of the consultant is to revise and amend the Maldives National Qualifications Framework.

The tasks will include, but will not be limited to, the following:

- Coordinate with MQA, TVETA, and other relevant stakeholders to clarify and understand the scope of the review and expected amendments.
- Based on the findings by MQA and TVETA, other relevant stakeholders, review the MNQF by meeting key stakeholders to explore the concerns related with the highlighted areas/ issues.
- Present solutions for the highlighted issues to the MQA, MQA Governing Board, TVETA and sector councils of TVETA.
- Share the reviewed MNQF draft version to stakeholders and get their feedback.
- Submit the final MNQF version to MQA, TVETA and present to the Governing Board of MQA for approval.

4. Required Qualifications and Experience

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

- At least a Master Degree in a related educational field;
- At least 5 years of experience in the work of development of quality assurance guidelines and standards on an international scale.
- At least 10 years of high level experience in matters related to Higher Education.

- Experience working with different government units and agencies, and familiarity with relevant government procedures and regulations;

5. Other Competencies

In addition to the required qualifications and experiences, consultant is expected to 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 reports in English.
- Proficiency in the use of MS Office, basic statistical software, email and the internet.
- Ability and willingness to travel to the Atolls for field visits to oversee project implementation.

6. Institutional Arrangements

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

7. Duration of services and Terms of Payment

The service is for a period of 3 months. The consultant will be hired 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.

8. Confidentiality, Ethics and Conflict of Interest:

The selected Consultant undertakes to comply with the World Bank's rules with regard to corrupt and fraudulent practices, conflict of interest and confidentiality. The Consultant shall maintain confidentiality on all sensitive information obtained during the assignment and shall not publish wholly or in part the findings or such information, without prior written consent by the Client. Any draft documents produced by the consultant will be discussed and cleared with the Client before their final issue.