**Republic of Albania**

**Ministry of Education and Sports**

**Improving Equitable Access to High Standard Public Services through GovTech**

**Program**

Terms of Reference

**For**

***SmartLab Project Manager for the SmartLab Implementation Team (SLIT)***

1. Background

#### The World Bank is financing a program on “Improving Equitable Access to High Standard Public Services through Gov Tech” aiming to transform learning, modernize customer service and ensure accessibility for all citizens, with the National Agency for Information Society (NAIS referred to as AKSHI hereafter) as the leading implementing agency.

#### The program is structured in three results areas:

#### Results Area 1: Enhancing E-Service Quality and User Experience. This RA will support the government program ambitions to improve: (i) usability, efficiency, and pro-activity of the e-Albania portal; and (ii) the quality of digital services, to provide advanced, proactive solutions on secure platforms and improve Digital Service Standards.

#### Results Area 2: Improving Digital Skills and Digital Inclusion. This RA will support the Albanian Digital Transformation program’s ambitious objectives to transform learning, modernize customer service and ensure accessibility for all citizens.

#### Results Area 3: Strengthening Priority GovTech Enablers. This RA supports the GoA in its program objectives to: (i) strengthen data governance, data security and transparency; and (ii) adopting enabling digital systems, requirements, and intelligent processes. In addition, aspects of this RA are cross-cutting insofar as they support the broader achievement of results under RAs 1 and 2: for example, pro-active services require robust data governance.

#### This ToR particularly refers to Results Area 2 and therein SmartLab activities as illustrated in Annex 1. While the AKSHI is the main implementing agency responsible for the achievement of the Program results and on SmartLab activities, determine technical specifications of the ICT devices, procure, install and establish SmartLabs in 200 schools, ensure availability of internet of prescribed bandwidth, provide technology maintenance support and roll out SMIP in schools. The Ministry of Education Sports (MoES) will be responsible for implementation of SmartLab activities that include, but not limited to development and delivery of ICT curricula in grades 1-3, selection and implementation of an appropriate numeracy e-learning solution for grades 1-3, development and implementation of a teacher and school principals continuous professional development strategies, assessment of learning by students and reporting results to the AKSHI in a timely manner. (Details on SmartLab activities are in Annex 1)

The MoES wishes to recruit a senior consultant with requisite expertise as elaborated in qualifications and experience section in this ToR, to lead a team of professionals to plan, implement and achieve results of SmartLab activities.

1. OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT

Objective of the consultancy is to lead the SmartLab implementation team within the MoES to plan and implement the SmartLab activities in accordance with the approved implementation plan with the support of a team of professionals and in close consultation and collaboration with the senior officials of the MoES, the Coordinating Unit established at AKSHI and other relevant stakeholders.

Specific Tasks:

***Planning and implementation of the SmartLab activities:***

* Leading the SmartLab implementation team:
* Preparing/ updating the SmartLab implementation and performance monitoring plan and present the new/updated plan to the SmartLab Working Group for necessary approval.
* Implement the plan in entirety in collaboration with the SmartLab implementation team.

***Coordination***

* Closely coordinate with the Coordination Unit (CU), established for the implementation of the GovTech project within AKSHI for necessary support.
* Coordinate with other relevant Directorates/Departments withing the MOES and other relevant agencies such as ASCAP for effective planning, implementation and monitoring of SmartLab activities.
* Coordinate with other external agencies such as Albanian American Development Foundation (AADF) for effective implementation of the SmartLab activities.

***Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting***

* Establish effective monitoring mechanisms to monitor the implementation of plan and collecting and collating the monitoring information and sharing with the relevant officials within the MoES and AKSHI.
* Coordinate preparation of quarterly progress reports and share with the SmartLab Working Group on a quarterly basis and/or as required by the MoES and/or SmartLab Working Group.
* Prepare necessary documents for the supervision missions to be conducted by the World Bank and facilitate supervision missions according to the agreed agenda.
* Prepare Disbursement-linked Indicators results achievement report in accordance with the verification protocol agreed for the Project and facilitate verification by the third-party verification agency.

***Fiduciary***

* In collaboration with the SmartLab implementation team, prepare SmartLab Implementation budget, ensuring that expenditures are within the allocated budget.
* Following the standard procedures, communicates with the Budget and Finance Department of the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MFE), through appropriate MOES structures, to ensure that the SmartLab Implementation Team budget and associated project financial plans are integrated into MFE planning processes;
* Coordinate for compliance with the agreed fiduciary arrangements for the project, include the audit and compilation and submission of Interim Financial Report (IRF), statutory audit,

***Environmental and Social Safeguards***

* Ensure compliance with Environmental and Social Safeguards arrangements of the project and prepare report on compliance.

***Communication and Information Dissemination***

* Facilitate effective communication on SmartLab activities within the MoES, across various levels of the MoES, across agencies and with other stakeholders, including citizens.
* In collaboration with the MoES communication department, appropriately disseminate information on the SmartLab activities and results achieved.

1. Reporting Requirements

The Consultant will work as part of the SLIT. He / She will report to and work under direction of the General Director of Policy and Development of Education and Sports. The Consultant will work in close cooperation with MoES, ASCAP and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that the project is managed efficiently and in compliance with the objectives of the Project Appraisal Document (PAD), Loan Agreement and Project Operational Manual (POM).

1. Duration of the assignment

The Consultant will work in the MoES premises in Tirana on full time basis during the assignment time. The initial duration of the assignment is 12 months from contract signing and/or entry into force of the contract, if specified differently in the contract, with the option of renewal based on satisfactory performance. The Consultant will be offered opportunities to develop professionally by attending relevant short training events and courses during the term of the assignment.

1. CLIENT’S CONTRIBUTION

The MoES will provide:

* Office space and equipment, internet connection, and means of communication, required for the Consultant to perform the tasks assigned.
* All relevant information required for effective delivery of duties by the consultant.
* Issue necessary official instructions to all relevant directorates, departments and agencies for extending cooperation to the Project Manager to enable her/him to discharge duties effectively.

1. OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Leave and other terms and conditions to be input by the MoES

1. Qualifications, Experience, and skills

The Consultant should have:

* Minimum Master’s degree in business administration, **administrative science**, economics information technology, health science or related field.
* **At least to 10 years** of overall professional experience utilising keen business, education, financial, and technology acumen to drive success across multiple sectors. Previous experience in international projects / organizations will be an advantage;
* **An experienced Project Manager** that navigates projects/programmers through changes and challenges, leading high performance teams in a matrix framework, managing large multi-million dollar budgets, and integrating sustainable management models. **At least two years as a manager in projects** financed by either the government and/or international development organizations.
* Strong familiarity with the functioning of the government and related institutions;
* Skilled in developing relationships with government departments, inter-agency coordination, international partners to achive project/program objectives and ensure sustainability of results through sucessfully transitioning of activities to the Government sector;
* Proven skills in introducing and managing enabling technology to enhance learning; strengthen data governance, security and transparency; modernize services and accessibility of key interest groups.
* Team leadership skills with ability to work in a matrix framework
* Capacity for independent functioning, decision making and problem solving.
* Ability to prioritize, work well under pressure and capably handle/juggle multiple tasks within tight deadlines. Experience working with cross-functional teams
* Excellent written and oral communication skills in English and Albanian language.
* Excellent skills in use of Microsoft Office and other software, including project management software.

1. CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

All data and information received from MoES and other sources for the purpose of this assignment is to be treated confidentially and are only to be used in connection with the execution of these Terms of Reference. All intellectual property rights arising from the execution of these Terms of Reference are assigned to MoES. The contents of written materials obtained and used in this assignment may not be disclosed to any third parties without the expressed advance written authorization of the MoES.

1. evaluation Criteria

Applicants that fulfill the qualification requirements will be further evaluated based on the below criteria:

General Qualifications – 30 points

Experience and skills – 60 points

Language and IT proficiencies – 10 points

1. Selection

The service will be selected under the provisions of the World Bank Procurement Regulations for Borrowers under Investment Project Financing” dated July 1, 2016, revised on November 2017, August 2018, and November 2020, based on the method of Selection of Individual

Annex 1

**Improving Digital and Foundational Skills.**

Improvement of digital and foundational skills will be primarily achieved through selected Education SmartLabs[[1]](#footnote-1) and additional supporting infrastructure, teaching and learning support (with a strong emphasis on an inclusive approach), alongside systemic capacity-building at 200 primary schools.

This initiative will also support the piloting of digital solutions for remote learning in one collective school and one remote school where the majority of learners are from the Roma community. The SmartLabs will be primarily used to teach digital and foundational skills (starting with numeracy) from Grades 1 to 3, as part of the national curriculum, as well as potentially supporting implementation of the ICT Curriculum at higher grade levels.

In terms of sequencing implementation, it will first support the roll-out of the digital skills strategy and curriculum. Then, once the capacity is built and necessary pedagogic changes are done in year one, it will expand to teaching numeracy (and possibly other foundational) skills. The Program will facilitate implementation of the approved ICT Curriculum, using Code Monkey (a proprietary digital skills platform being used already in Albania and funded outside the Program).

For foundational skills, the Program will start with supporting numeracy skills, identifying a suitable online numeracy solution that can be piloted and used in the 200 SmartLabs supported through this PforR, as well as additional investment in bespoke platforms and content over time (with all platforms functioning under a clearly defined data governance framework to ensure strong data protection, especially for children). In all instances, Program implementation will incorporate the design and implementation of suitable assessment frameworks to assess children’s grade-appropriate acquisition of knowledge and the contribution made by the SmartLabs intervention to their improvement.

A Steering Committee will ensure strategic implementation overview, high-level inter-institutional coordination and a whole-of-government approach to implementation of the Program

A Working Groups (WG), composed of high-level representatives, will provide policy advice and oversee the overall implementation, including technical aspects of Program implementation on the SmartLabs.

The AKSHI is the implementing agency responsible for the achievement of the Program results. It has a competent and technically qualified team which is highly committed to implementing the Digital Transformation program of the GoA.

To strengthen data collection and result monitoring of the Program, and to help meet the fiduciary responsibilities under the IPF, the AKSHI will set up a dedicated Coordination Unit (CU). The CU set up within AKSHI will support the overall monitoring of the proposed Program, including data collection, implementation of the M&E plan, verification of DLIs and fiduciary responsibilities.

MoES will lead activities on the SmartLabs from the educational and learning perspective, including the learning content development and deployment, teachers’ capacity building and curriculum upgrading, as well as providing data for the learning monitoring and accountability system. MoES will assign a team for the for the successful implementation of the PforR, with internal staff and external experts. This team is expected to work closely with the CU for all activities under the SmartLabs component.

The CU will hold regular meetings with the MoES SmartLabs team, and, the MoES SmartLabs team would be invited to other CU meetings when SmartLabs issues are discussed.

1. ‘SmartLabs’ are judiciously selected packages of ICT infrastructure, broadband internet connections, and furniture arrangements that can be used flexibly for a wide range of different educational purposes. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)