

## Call for proposals for an external evaluation of a UNESCO SIDA-funded project

UNESCO is seeking expertise for the evaluation of an externally funded project entitled “Rethinking Learning in a Complex World” (2014-18).

The contractor(s) will be responsible for evaluating project results in terms of outputs and outcomes and, to the extent possible, the impact/influence on the basis of the Results Assessment Framework which includes three main lines of activities and four outputs:

1. Think pieces and literature reviews to inform global debates on education and development through the [Education Research and Foresight \[ERF\] Working Papers series](#) [Output 1]
2. Education policy dialogue on foundational principles for a humanistic approach to educational governance in the 21st century. This line of activity including the publication of a global report [Rethinking Education: Towards a global common good?](#) (2015) [Output 2] served as a platform for a series of national, sub-regional and global policy fora [Output 3].
3. Foresight studies on the future of education and learning around thematic areas identified in the global 2015 *Rethinking Education* report [Output 4].

### I. BACKGROUND

As an international intergovernmental agency, UNESCO has a dual role in global educational development. First, as a technical agency, UNESCO has a mandated role in leading, coordinating and monitoring education in the international development agenda. A second important function is to serve as a global observatory or think tank, leading and informing the normative global debate on education and development through a humanistic lens that can guide educational policy and practice in a context of societal transformation.

This project is a contribution to strengthening this second function of UNESCO as a global observatory or think tank. It is a contribution to UNESCO’s four-year education programme (2014-17) in Education Research and Foresight as articulated in Expected Result 11: ‘The future education agenda and global education policies are shaped drawing on UNESCO’s research and foresight studies.’

The direct beneficiaries of the project are policy makers, researchers, academics, policy analysts, and professionals working in education and development.

### II. PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

The project aims to strengthen UNESCO’s “observatory” function in education. It contributes to the global debate on foundational principles that can guide education policy and practice for the future by: (i) Providing policy-makers, educationists, and academics with insight into various facets of the future of education and learning; and (ii) Encouraging public policy dialogue on foundational principles for a humanistic approach to educational governance in the 21st century.

### III. PURPOSE AND EXPECTED USE OF THE EVALUATION

As part of the project monitoring, reporting and evaluation, UNESCO is required to provide the donor (Swedish International Development Agency - SIDA) with the results of an external evaluation. This evaluation is to be undertaken in accordance with the UNESCO evaluation policy, assessing the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the project. It should examine progress made towards achieving the results as agreed with SIDA, lessons learnt and present recommendations regarding project design, delivery and achievements, as well as longer-term sustainability.

The main purpose of the evaluation is to assess the achievements (activities, outputs, outcomes) of the project. The evaluation should also assess the quality of the main outputs and outcomes and, to the extent possible, the impact or perceived influence of the project by a selection of beneficiaries.

The findings of the evaluation will be used by UNESCO and the donor to ensure the project's relevance, efficiency and effectiveness, in the prospect of continued support to UNESCO programmatic work in education research and foresight for the period 2018-2021.

### IV. SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation will focus on key dimensions of:

- a. project design;
- b. governance and management; and
- c. complementarities/synergies with other relevant UNESCO projects.

The assessment will be based on the standard evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability, and consider additional dimensions such as coherence, cooperation and partnerships. Evaluation questions, to be further developed and refined by the evaluator during the inception phase, should address the following issues:

#### *Relevance:*

- Are the project outputs contributing to strengthen UNESCO's "observatory" function in education within a longer-term perspective?
- To what extent is the project coherent with UNESCO's [biennial programme \[C/5\]](#) and its [Mid-term Strategy \[C/4\]](#), and other international development goals in particular Sustainable Development Goal 4 devoted to education?
- To what extent are the project goals coherent with Member States' development needs and priorities?
- What, if any, is UNESCO's comparative advantage in designing and implementing this project?

#### *Efficiency:*

- What measures were taken during planning and implementation to ensure that resources were efficiently used?
- Were the outputs delivered in a timely manner for maximum effect on the respective outcomes?
- What activities most directly led to the desired outcomes, and what activities did this to a lesser extent?

- Could the outputs have been delivered with fewer resources without reducing their quality and quantity?
- Did UNESCO's organizational structure, managerial support and coordination mechanisms effectively support their delivery? Did the relevant UNESCO entities cooperate in a complementary manner? What changes would be needed to scale up the education research and foresight programme?

*Effectiveness:*

- What has been the achievement of the outcomes and their contribution to 38 C/5 Expected Result 11 (pp 42-44 of the UNESCO's [biennial programme \[C/5\]](#))?
- What are the enabling factors and obstacles for the achievement or reasons for non-achievement?
- To what extent have beneficiaries found the outcomes relevant and useful for their own work in policy and research?
- What would be the most relevant issues to monitor per outcome if the programme would continue with the same design?

*Impact/Perceived influence:*

- What are the intended and unintended, both positive and negative, effects of the project (per output primarily)?
- To what extent can the benefits of the project for beneficiaries be identified and measured?
- To what extent can actions undertaken (strategic orientation of national education reform, research initiated...) be attributed to the project?
- What measures or activities could have been implemented to obtain greater impact?

*Sustainability:*

- What is the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be maintained for a reasonably long period of time after the project ends?
- What is the likelihood that the project receives continuous support (financially, politically) by local institutions and public authorities?
- Are there any other factors that significantly challenge the medium and long-term maintenance of the project results?
- How could a future similar project address challenges related to insufficient internal/external funding for education research and foresight activities?
- What is needed during the coming four years (2018-2021) to establish sustainability of the project in view of contributing to 39C/5 ER10 (pp 57-59 of UNESCO's [39 C/5](#)), in case SIDA is unable to continue the extra-budgetary support after 2021?

## **V. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

On the basis of these terms of reference, the evaluator(s) should develop a comprehensive approach and methodology for collecting and analyzing qualitative first-hand data (including documents produced by the UNESCO Secretariat, reports of experts undertaking missions, etc.) in order to assess against a set of indicators that he/she will have developed.

The suggested evaluation methodology will include the following elements. The evaluator(s) is/are expected to elaborate an appropriate methodology in their technical proposal and further refine it in the inception phase.

- **Briefing meeting(s)** with UNESCO staff at the outset of the evaluation process;
- **Desk study and analysis** of all pertinent documents including the agreement with SIDA (programme document, RAF, budget), all project documents provided by UNESCO, i.e. previous progress reports, papers and publications produced by the project, the webpage of Education Research and Foresight, other relevant documents that were produced in the context of the project;
- **Development of a Theory of Change for the project;**
- **Meetings and interviews** with key stakeholders (such as UNESCO entities (Knowledge Societies Division; Programme for Intercultural Dialogue); Specialized institutes (IBE Geneva, IIEP Buenos Aires, UIL Hamburg); UNESCO field offices (Bangkok, Dakar, Santiago); National Commissions for UNESCO; UNESCO Chairs; Research institutes and networks (NORRAG, OSF, RtE project), as well as other possible sources of relevant information;
- **Questionnaires** and online **surveys** where relevant; and
- **Field mission** to a select number of countries (1-2) for the purpose of enriching the analysis of project performance, in particular the achievement of results. The countries will be selected in consultation with UNESCO.

**Additional Information:**

UNESCO will provide the contractor with relevant documentation and details about the project and a suggested list of partners, beneficiaries, etc. with contact details. Interviews will have to be conducted in English, French and/or Spanish. With regard to required travel, it is expected that the evaluator(s) conduct 2-3 visits to UNESCO Paris Headquarters (for the briefing meeting; the inception phase; during data collection interviews; and to present the results of the evaluation to UNESCO), possible field missions (2) to evaluate the project impact at the country level. Travel to be undertaken will be decided upon in consultation with the evaluator(s) and UNESCO.

## **VI. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The contractor is expected to provide UNESCO with a **comprehensive evaluation report** of no more than 40 pages (excluding annexes) covering the entire period of implementation. The evaluator (evaluation team) will be responsible for logistics: office space, administrative and secretarial support, telecommunications, printing of documentation, travel arrangements (if needed) and logistics for field mission, etc. The evaluator is also responsible for the dissemination of all methodological tools, such as surveys, and providing the deliverables outlined below.

The UNESCO Section of Partnerships, Cooperation and Research (ED/ESC/PCR) will facilitate the evaluation process to the extent possible by providing access to relevant information such as monitoring data/project progress reports and by providing contact information such as the email addresses of relevant stakeholders and networks to be consulted during the evaluation. The donor may be requested to provide planning documents, mission reports or other relevant documents. SIDA will have the opportunity to read and comment upon the draft report with minimum 2 working weeks to respond.

## **VII. DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE**

## *Deliverables*

The evaluator should provide UNESCO with the following three deliverables:

- Deliverable 1: a 10 - 15 page inception report written in English, presenting an implementation strategy, proposing the evaluation questions, the detailed methodology, the data collection methods, a work plan, the list of documents to be studied and the list of different types of interviewees to be contacted by 30 March 2018. The evaluator(s) will be invited to participate in an inception workshop to discuss deliverable 1 with UNESCO to be scheduled in early April 2018.
- Deliverable 2: a draft final report in English, with draft recommendations, of no more than 40 pages (excluding annexes) by 30 April 2018. The evaluator(s) will be invited to participate in workshops with stakeholders (e.g., UNESCO HQs, UNESCO Field office colleagues) to share and discuss the findings of the evaluation (e.g., via Skype).
- Deliverable 3: a final evaluation report of maximum 40 pages (excluding annexes) in English by 1 May 2018.

The final evaluation report should have the following elements:

1. Executive summary (maximum of 2 pages)
2. Description of the SIDA project
3. Evaluation purpose
4. Evaluation methodology
5. Evaluation findings
6. Lessons learned
7. Recommendations: numbered and actionable.
8. Annexes (including list of interviews with the information of all individuals/organizations interviewed or concerned (name, title, role in the project, contact info: phone, direct email), and organizational websites, aggregate findings, data collection instruments, main documents consulted, terms of reference, etc.).

## **VIII. REQUIRED PROFILE OF THE EVALUATOR**

The evaluator(s) should possess the following mandatory qualifications and experience:

- At least 7 years of international experience in programme/project evaluation in an international context, preferably in the field of education and development and international cooperation.
- At least 10 years of demonstrated experience in evaluation methodologies and techniques, both qualitative and quantitative.
- Knowledge of the financing, monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms of international organizations.
- Competence in the analysis of public policies.

### Team Leader/ Senior Evaluation Expert

- Advanced university degree in specialized fields of social science or related fields.
- Excellent oral communication and report writing skills in English.
- Extensive knowledge of and more than 10 years of experience in applying qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods.
- Substantial expertise in evaluating strategic thinking and communication activities in the last 7 years (advisory, lobbying, advocacy) addressing policy levels.

- Provide at least 3 to 4 references of assignments completed in the field of education policies, development, education research at international level.
- Excellent data analysis and synthesis skills.
- Fluency in French and/or Spanish is an advantage

#### Evaluation team member / Evaluation Expert

- Advanced university degrees in specialized fields of communication, social science or related fields.
- A minimum of 5 years of experience in programme/project evaluation on visibility/impact tracking of research outputs.
- A minimum of 2 years' experience in the last 5 years in strategic communication activities (advisory, lobbying, advocacy...) addressing policy levels.
- Excellent data analysis skills.
- Oral and writing skills in English to the highest standards.

Desired qualifications:

#### Team leader

- It is desirable to have at least 2-3 years of work experience within the United Nations.
- It is desirable that the team leader has at least three references relating to development of evaluation methodologies and techniques both qualitative and quantitative applied in the field of education development and/or public policies.
- In-depth understanding and extensive knowledge of issues pertaining to education research and foresight, and education policies.

#### Evaluation team member

- Preference will be given to the person with strong background in digital communication, and marketing.

### **IX. HOW TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL**

Applicants are requested to submit as a team or for individual positions an electronic proposal including:

- Curriculum Vitae of the proposed team members
- Technical proposal including an understanding of the TORs and a methodology indicating how they propose to undertake the assignment, a work plan and timeline (maximum 4 pages)
- Budget in US dollars including the rate for the consultancy and the expected travel costs.
- Two examples of evaluation reports recently completed, if possible relevant to the subject of the evaluation

Interested candidates are kindly requested to submit their offer **before 20 March 2018 at 16h00** to the following email address: [ESC-PCR@unesco.org](mailto:ESC-PCR@unesco.org)

For any requests for clarification, please contact Sobhi Tawil, Chief, Section of Partnerships, Cooperation and Research ([s.tawil@unesco.org](mailto:s.tawil@unesco.org)).

### **REFERENCE DOCUMENTS (TO BE PROVIDED BY UNESCO TO THE EVALUATOR(S) DURING THE INCEPTION PHASE)**

- The project document for the project and Results Assessment Framework as per agreement with SIDA
- Annual project progress reports submitted to donor by UNESCO
- Papers and publications produced by the project
- Internally conducted tracking of web visibility and impact/influence of project outputs
- Any related publication or resources that can help the evaluation
- UNESCO's website for Education Research and Foresight: <https://en.unesco.org/education2030-sdg4/rethinkingeducation>