

REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE, EDUCATION
Donje Svetice 38, Zagreb 10000, Croatia

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Digital, Innovation, and Green Technology Project (DIGIT) 9558-HR

Project Implementation Unit (PIU)

Financial Specialist

1. Background

The Government of the Republic of Croatia and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) have signed a Loan Agreement (Loan Number 9558-HR) for the Digital Innovation and Green Technology Project (DIGIT) in the amount of EUR 106 million. The Project seeks to advance research and innovation with a digital and green focus through enhancing institutional infrastructure and research performance of research organizations and firms. The Project will be managed by the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia.

The Project comprises two components over a duration of 5 years. Component 1 (*Enabling institutional conditions for digital and green research and innovation*) provides technical assistance and financing to strengthen institutional capacities and support the efficient use of EU funds. Component 2 (*Programs for digital and green research and innovation*) provides sub-financing to cover the gaps in EU funding and improve the targeting of research and innovation support to digital and green technology.

The Project envisages the formation of the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) which will assist the Ministry of Science and Education with day-to-day Project implementation, and shall be responsible for (i) planning, coordination implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of Project activities, (ii) procurement and financial management, (iii) social and environmental standards compliance, and (iv) reporting. The PIU will also undertake responsibility for implementation of Project activities in accordance with the Project Operations Manual, Croatian legislation and regulation, and relevant World Bank procedures. It will also prepare and submit reports and information on the project to the Ministry of Science and Education, Steering Committee, World Bank, and potential auditors, as well as keep the business documentation of the Project and all other duties connected to the Project. Furthermore, the PIU will provide support to the Croatian Science Foundation related to the Foundation's obligations and activities stemming from the DIGIT Project.

2. Objectives

The Financial Specialist will be responsible for the overall management of financial compliance for the needs of the Project and the PIU as outlined in the Project Operations Manual. They will be charged with organizational and administrative activities including financial management, such as disbursement, payments, and reporting.

3. Scope of Work

The Financial Specialist will carry out the following activities:

- Semi-annual Interim Unaudited Financial reports will be prepared no later than forty-five (45) days after the end of each reporting semester. The Financial Specialist will also support the drafting of annual project financial statements for auditing purposes, as well as monthly reports on disbursement and quarterly financial statements.
- Overall management and coordination of financial activities under the Project, including control and monitoring of financial documents as well as cooperation and coordination with relevant departments within the Ministry of Science and Education and Croatian Science Foundation;
- Process and monitor financial statements, as well as obtain necessary clearances from the Ministry of Science and Education and the World Bank;
- Maintain and handle, in a manner acceptable to the Ministry of Science and Education and the World Bank, all finance related records;
- Manage financial obligations and accounting obligations through the Ministry of Science and Education's SAP platform;
- Prepare documents for payments for Project activities such as goods, consultants services, training, sub-financing, etc., including collecting relevant information, verifying accuracy, obtaining signatures, submitting documents for payment, and following up where necessary;
- Coordinate audit activities;
- Be fully familiar with the activities of the PIU's Procurement Specialist in all areas, including the preparation of Terms of Reference, selection and evaluation processes, contracting, and supervision and monitoring of contracts, as well as obtaining necessary clearances from the Ministry of Science and Education and the World Bank;
- Provide assistance to beneficiaries in financial management matters, reporting and business planning;
- Follow-up on various project activities with the beneficiaries, the Ministry of Science and Education, the World Bank, and others.
- Ensure compliance with the financial reporting obligations set out in the Project Operations Manual;
- Other activities as required.

4. Deliverables

The Financial Specialist shall be responsible for the following deliverables:

- Overall management of Project financial management in a timely, cost effective, quality and transparent manner;

- Ensure periodic financial reporting to the Ministry of Science and Education, the World Bank, the Project Steering Committee, and other relevant parties, including semi-annual and annual financial reports, as well as reports as required by the Ministry of Science and Education, the World Bank;
- Support the Procurement Specialist in the efficient functioning of contracting, bidding, hiring, and procurement procedures for Project activities and PIU needs;
- Furnish quality business plans and budgets in a manner acceptable to the Ministry of Science and Education and the World Bank;
- Support the Project Manager with other outputs and obligations related to financial management.

5. Length of assignment

The initial contract under this Terms of Reference will be signed, on a part-time basis (four working hours per day), for the duration of one year with possible extensions until December 29, 2028, subject to the Financial Specialist's satisfactory performance and business needs of the Ministry of Science and Education.

6. Qualifications

The Financial Specialist should:

- Hold a Bachelor degree or specialist degree in economics, sciences, law, management, or arts;
- Have at least 5 years of working experience in finance and/or accounting related fields;
- Have an understanding of relevant World Bank and Croatian regulatory procedures;
- Be fluent in Croatian, and have excellent knowledge of spoken and written English;
- Have excellent digital literacy and command of computer tools and applications (MSOffice and Internet Software are a must).

Experience working on World Bank projects as well as projects financed by other international financial institutions would be an advantage.

7. Input to be provided by the Ministry of Science and Education

The Ministry of Science and Education will provide the PIU with office space, facilities, and essential working materials such as computers, stationery, and related fixtures.

8. Reporting

The Financial Specialist will report to the PIU's Project Manager as well as to Hrvoje Meštrić, Director-General for Science and Technology, Ministry of Science and Education, and Ana Varjačić, Head of Sector for Programs and European Union Projects, Ministry of Science and Education.

In addition to Deliverables and reporting related to the Scope of Work described above, the Financial Specialist will also submit monthly reports to the PIU Project Manager that will include:

- **timesheet** – short description of work undertaken for each day of the reporting period;
- **monthly report** – brief summary of work undertaken in the reporting period;
- **monthly work plan** – a brief summary of work that is planned for the next reporting period.

The timesheet and monthly report will serve as a basis for payment of consultant fees to the Specialist.

9. Communications

The Contact person for the consultant is Ana Varjačić, Head of Sector for Programs and European Union Projects, Ministry of Science and Education, Donje Svetice 38, Zagreb, 10000, Croatia; phone: +385 1 4594 325; email: Ana.Varjadic@mzo.hr.