



Request for Proposals

Nursing and midwifery skills eco-system analyses – Georgia

Issue Date:	January 30, 2023
Closing Date For Proposals:	March 10, 2023
Closing Time:	18:00 Tbilisi time
Project Title:	USAID Industry-led Skills Development Program
Offer Reference Number:	RFP-001-2023

1. Disclaimer

The information contained in this request for proposals (hereinafter referred to as RFP) document is provided to the Offeror(s) by the IESC for the USAID Industry-led Skills Development Program (the Program).

The IESC desires to receive proposals from companies (Offerors) who are interested in and capable of serving as a service provider for conducting nursing and midwifery skills eco-system analyses.

The nursing and midwifery skills eco-system analyses are part of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the USAID Industry-led Skills Development Program's broad cooperation, which aims to contribute to improving the skills of the healthcare workforce in Georgia. The EBRD and the Program joined forces to establish a Public-Private Dialogue (PPD) platform for elaborating workable strategies for healthcare professionals with a specific focus on advancing the skills, competencies, and career opportunities of nurses and midwiferies. The collaboration includes the following:

- a) Reviewing the nursing and midwifery skills eco-system within the healthcare sector, identifying key issues on development/revision of occupational/educational standards, and designing appropriate improvements;
- b) Establishing a thematic working group that includes private sector representatives, representatives of clusters and business associations, government, and civil society organizations, and ensure it is operational; and
- c) Ensuring that suggested improvements to the challenges identified during the assessment stage are raised at the policy level, monitored, and impact evaluated.

The Program will conduct a skills ecosystem analysis of the healthcare sector, while the EBRD will engage a team of experts in setting up and running the public-private partnership platform.

The purpose of this RFP document is to provide potential Offerors with information to assist them in the preparation of their proposals for the services that IESC seeks to source. This

RFP document does not claim to contain all the information each potential Offeror may require. Each Offeror should conduct their own assessment and should check the accuracy, reliability, and completeness of the information in this RFP document, and where necessary obtain independent advice from appropriate sources.

IESC plans to award one contract. IESC may cancel this RFP and is under no obligation to make an award as a result of this RFP, although IESC fully anticipates doing so. IESC may, at its own discretion, but without being under any obligation to do so, update, amend, or supplement the information in this RFP document. IESC, at its own discretion, may award a service provider to conduct only a part of the activities in this RFP. Any contract resulting from this RFP will be a Firm Fixed Price contract.

Note that the selected Offeror may be subject to the approval of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Any activities under a final award are subject to and shall be carried out in accordance with the regulation promulgated by USAID, the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), and any other subsequently published rule or regulation governing USAID programs.

Interested offerors are responsible for all costs associated with preparation and submission of proposals and will not be reimbursed by IESC.

2. Background

IESC is a leading U.S. nonprofit organization that fosters private sector development in the economically developing world. Since 1964, we have delivered lasting solutions that have resulted in more than 1.5 million jobs in 137 countries. We partner with businesses, cooperatives, entrepreneurs, jobseekers, and governments to sustainably build capacity, create jobs, and grow enterprises, sharing proven skills and experience that improve the lives of individuals, families, and communities around the world. Our major funders today are the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), among others.

IESC is implementing the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Industry-led Skills Development Program (the Program) in Georgia. The purpose of the Program is to develop industry-relevant human capacity that will contribute to high-value employment opportunities and increased economic competitiveness in Georgia. The Program will achieve this by systematically engaging employers to equip Georgians with skills demanded in sectors with high growth potential and create direct linkages between training programs and employment opportunities. The Program gives a leading role to the private sector to catalyze demand-driven skills development throughout Georgia.

The Program is headquartered in Tbilisi with Program activities operating throughout Georgia. To ensure national coverage, the Program engages with networks of employers, business associations, education and training providers both public and private, chambers of commerce, local and national government representatives, and development partners to effectively engage the private sector, undertake outreach and marketing, deliver tailored

and demand-driven grants, implement activities creating a network of employer-led skill development initiatives and partnerships across Georgia.

The Program prioritizes interventions under three components:

Component 1: Incentivize private sector engagement in skills development;

Component 2: Establish skills training programs demanded by the private sector;

Component 3: Increase access to training opportunities for rural and priority populations.

3. Period of Performance

The estimated period of performance will be from **April 3, 2023 through October 3, 2023.**

4. Scope Statement

The Georgian Government's Vision for Developing the Healthcare System (2022-2030) and new Strategy for the Development of Nursing (2019) seek to improve skills and professional standards for nurses. The Ministry of IDPs, Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia in coordination with "National Council of Nursing Professional Development" prepared a "Nursing Development Strategy," which was approved by the Government of Georgia on July 16th, 2019 (resolution #334). Specifically, the Strategy is designed to contribute to the development of an efficient system of human resource planning, education/professional development, and a sustainable, modern regulatory framework for the nursing profession. Along with comprehensive communication interventions for the popularization of the profession, the strategy is designed to enhance the quality and safety of the health care service, which is a prerequisite for improving the health conditions of Georgia's population. Fulfilment of their objectives will boost workforce numbers; upgrade training programs; and introduce an integral new professional licensing scheme for nurses. Achieving these goals will constitute large-scale investments of resources and capacity.

The Georgian health care sector is a regulated sector, primarily driven by service provision by the private sector. The strengthening of companies operating in the field contributes to high quality service and increased access to it. Analysis of the sector's challenges inevitably identifies the deficit in nurse personnel as the ratio of nurses to doctors is far below EU or US standards. Aligning Georgia's healthcare workforce with the European Union's per capita levels, for example, would require adding 20,500 new nurses and midwives to Georgia's existing stock (currently numbering only ~13,000).

While there are positive trends and the Ministry of IDPs, Labor, Health and Social Affairs, with European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) support, has already started work on a regulatory model to be pursued in line with the international best practices, the nursing skills ecosystem needs improvement.

The USAID Industry-led Skills Development Program has launched partnerships with two healthcare providers to develop skills training programs focusing on the development and

strengthening of professional development schemes and quality assurance of nurses. Upcoming regulation of the nursing profession requires joint efforts from various stakeholders to engage in the preparatory work for meeting the set standards. Coordination of the public and private sectors is essential to avoid scarcity of staff on the labor market that might result in the collapse of healthcare services.

The solutions to the above-mentioned challenges require strategic partnerships, and speaking and acting with one voice. To consolidate efforts, the USAID Industry-led Skills Development Program is collaborating with the EBRD, which has been supporting the Government of Georgia (GoG) in reforming nursing and midwifery education and licensing since 2017.

Collaboration between EBRD and the USAID Industry-led Skills Development Program relies on common acknowledgement of the identification specific obstacles and gaps and ultimately practical and policy-level solutions in coordination with relevant stakeholders.

Establishment of a **public-private dialogue platform (the Platform)** with participation from policy makers, government, public sector, healthcare service providers, educational institutions, industry experts and associations is considered to be an efficient approach to expediting the harmonization process to upcoming regulations. Agreeing on a common vision, strategies, approaches, and action plans will simplify the pathway of professional development and career advancement for nurses. A clear understanding of the necessary steps and required resources from the private sector will enhance the smooth transition of human resource management from the old system into the new scheme, and at the same time benefit the educational sector.

Conducting a nursing and midwifery skills eco-system analyses ("assignment") is the first phase of the EBRD and the USAID Industry-led Skills Development Program's joint intervention, which is intended to inform the advocacy efforts of the public-private dialogue platform (which is to be created during phase two).

All quotations must be valid for ninety (90) days.

5. Statement Of Work

5.1. Schedule of Authorities

The selected Offeror will report to the Program's Private Sector Engagement Team Lead.

5.2. Activities

The Selected Offeror is expected to undertake a Baseline Assessment of the skills ecosystem for nursing and midwifery occupations in Georgia, including but not limited to:

- **Analysis of recent key trends in nursing and midwifery occupations:** The assessment report should provide a portrait of the sector in Georgia with available

statistics and describe the impact of COVID-19 and related challenges and opportunities emerged in the aftermath of the pandemic.

- **Overview of skills supply and demand in the sector:** The report should focus on identifying skills mismatches and outlining demand-side as well as supply-side challenges of nursing and midwifery skills development.
- **Challenges and opportunities around inclusion in the sector:** The report should look at different inclusion challenges for specific target groups, i.e., men and women, youth, and minorities and include a review of inclusive skills development practice in the sector.
- **Overview of nursing and midwifery skills development practices in Georgia:** This should include analysis of resources/inputs (human, financial) currently available in the system from both the public and private sectors.
- **Analysis of best international practices in the skills area for nursing and midwifery education:** This should outline the leading international practices around education for nurses and midwives, drawing on the lessons learned from leading healthcare systems around the world.
- **Overview of policy measures to support nursing and midwifery skills development:** The report should review the relevant institutional context and key policy measures in place, including a brief overview of cross-sectoral institutions and legislations, national measures on nursing and midwifery skills development, specific developments in the healthcare sector, and a summary of international donor activities in the area.
- **Development of Country recommendations and key messages:** This section should bring forth ideas for operational responses the Platform could pursue throughout policy-level engagements (specific areas to target or institutions to foster more broadly at the regulatory level).
- **Propose the best format for the Platform to advocate the implementation of the recommendations:** This should include identification of key stakeholders (private sector representatives, representatives of clusters and business associations, government, policy makers, education institutions, and civil society) and defining their roles within the platform and formal buy-in from their side in the form of Letter of Intents (LOIs). At least 10 LOIs should be signed.
- **Organize an event to present the results of the Baseline Assessment:** The event should gather all key stakeholders, and summarize relevant findings and recommendations.

6. Contract Type and Deliverables

The contract is anticipated to be Firm Fixed Price. The list of deliverables for use in preparing proposals can be found below; costs per each deliverable in the table below shall be proposed by the Offeror. Payment will be made based on the achievement/completion of each deliverable.

Deliverable	Anticipated Due Date
Inception report, including the following components:	May 8, 2023

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations of Assessment • Assessment methodology and data collection methods (derived from methodology), • Survey questionnaire and script for the focus groups and interviews, • Indicative timeline 	
Draft version of the Baseline Assessment	July 31, 2023
Final version of the Baseline Assessment , that includes following components <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive summary (max. 2 pages); • Brief description of the context • Description of Assessment goals and objectives; • Description of methodology and data collection tools utilized during the assessment • Presentation of main findings and conclusions; • Discussion of lessons learned; • Recommendations; • Annexes as provided in the inception report, including all data collection tools, list of interviewees, etc. 	August 31, 2023
Signed Letters of Intent by the stakeholders and the Scope of Work for the Platform	August 31, 2023
Report on final event for presenting the results of the Assessment, list of participants	September 29, 2023

7. Instructions to Offerors

7.1. Submission

- 1) Offers received after the closing date may not be considered.
- 2) Offers must be in Georgian Lari with reference to U.S. Dollars.
- 3) Technical and cost proposals must be submitted as two separate documents. Cost information must not be included in the technical proposal.

Offerors must submit their proposals by the closing date and time, as listed on page one, via the following email: skillsgrants@iesc.org

7.2. Clarification and Amendments

Offerors may request clarifications via the following email: skillsgrants@iesc.org, no later than **18:00 Tbilisi time on February 15, 2023**. IESC will provide answers to these questions and requests for clarification asked by all Offerors simultaneously via email and posted on the IESC website with the RFP before the close of business on/or before **18:00 Tbilisi time on February 22, 2023**. IESC may not answer questions before the proposal submission deadline outside of the allotted response period for clarifications. No questions will be answered over the phone or in person.

7.3. Cover Page and Markings

In addition to the required proposal documents listed in sections 10 and 11 below, please include a cover page with your submission for the technical and the cost proposals (separate cover pages). The cover page should be on service provider letterhead and should contain the following information:

- 1) Project or Title (from the front page of this RFP document)
- 2) Offer Reference Number (from the front page of this RFP document)
- 3) Service Provider Name
- 4) Service Provider Address
- 5) Name of Service Provider's authorized representative
- 6) Contact person if different than Service Provider's representative
- 7) Telephone #, Cellular/Mobile Phone #, Email address
- 8) Duration of Validity of proposal
- 9) Payment terms
- 10) Total Proposed Price (**cover page of cost proposal only**)
- 11) Signature, date, and time

7.4. Chronological List of Proposal Events

The following calendar summarizes important dates in the solicitation process. Offerors must strictly follow these deadlines.

Activity	Due Date
RFP Published	January 30, 2023
Deadline for Written Questions	February 15 2023 18:00 Tbilisi
Answers Provided to Questions/Clarifications	February 22, 2023 18:00 Tbilisi
Proposal Submission Due Date	March 10, 2023 18:00 Tbilisi
Estimated Start Date of the Contract	April 3, 2023

The dates above may be modified at the sole discretion of IESC. Any changes will be published in an amendment to this RFP.

8. Eligibility Requirements

Offeror must be a registered legal entity, registered with the duly recognized authorities in the form of a company, association, or NGO. The Offeror must have been registered and

operating for at least two years already. Offerors may be required to present proof of registration and must have demonstrated experience in:

- Provision of paid business advisory/consulting, research services, be commercially oriented and have a sufficient pool of customers and portfolio of implemented projects.
- Working in conducting research, preferably in the health care or skills development sector.

Award may be contingent upon USAID final approval.

9. Basis for Award

IESC anticipates that the award will be based on best-value principles. Accordingly, the award will be made to the technically acceptable Offerors whose proposals provide the greatest overall value to IESC and the USAID Industry-led Skills Development Program, price, and other factors considered. The winning proposal must conform to all solicitation requirements.

To determine best value, proposals will be evaluated by a selection committee on the criteria below. The number of points assigned, totaling 100 points, indicates the relative importance of each individual criterion. Offerors should note that these criteria serve to: (a) identify the significant factors that Offerors should address in their proposals; and (b) set the standard against which all proposals will be evaluated.

10. Technical Proposal Evaluation

Please read the following instructions for preparing proposals carefully. Proposals must be organized into sections corresponding to the sections presented in **10.1 Technical Evaluation Criteria** and numbered accordingly. Please stay within the page limits given below. Only include the requested information and avoid submitting extra content. Any text or pages exceeding the page limitation for each section of the proposal may be redacted and not evaluated.

Proposals shall be written in English with each page numbered consecutively. Cover pages, dividers, and tables of contents are not subject to the page limit.

10.1. Technical Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria. Points will also reflect the overall presentation of the proposal, which should be clear, complete, well organized, and well written. Most importantly, proposals should address all the requirements listed in this RFP.

[1] Technical and management approach: 3 page limit – 40 possible points

Proposals will be scored on the demonstration of technical approach to conduct activities and deliver the deliverables as outlined in **Section 5.2 Activities** and **Section 6.**

Contract Type and Deliverables and will be reviewed based on:

- Outline of the methodology for assessment; and
- Action plan for implementing the assignment.

[2] Offeror's past performance and references: 3 page limit (not including samples of previous work, which may be attachments and/or references) - 40 possible points

The proposal must provide a detailed account of the Offeror's record in implementing similar activities to those outlined in the tasks and activities. The technical proposal shall include a summary of past performance. Offerors should provide experience in general, and specifically include experience in developing strategies and reforms desirable in health sector, baseline survey and assessment services, working on skills development initiatives, experience in policy drafting and implementation, and management of diverse working groups and/or stakeholders.

This section should include sufficient information to demonstrate the Offeror's performance for the above tasks and activities and include how the overall approach, including problem solving, is based on extensive prior experience in sectoral analytical papers.

Offerors should provide a minimum of three (3) references for past and present projects and include the contact information of three prior or current clients for which the Offeror has completed a similar task. References must include contact information.

[3] Offeror's Personnel Experience and Capacities: 3 page limit (not including resumes or CVs, which are attachments) - 20 possible points

The technical proposal must include a description (biographical sketch acceptable) of a minimum of one, but not more than two, senior management personnel who would directly work on the activities in the contract. Resumes or CVs must be submitted as attachments for individuals submitted in this section and do not count within the page limitations of this section.

This section will be marked on the extent to which the Offeror's or its personnel have experience in providing the required services.

11. Cost Proposal Evaluation

The Offeror shall submit a separate cost proposal that includes the cost of performing the activities as described above. These costs should be broken down to show the separate cost elements of each deliverable and the **total estimated cost for all deliverables listed in Section 6. Contract Type and Deliverables**. As noted above, IESC will pay a fixed price per approved completion of each deliverable listed in Section 6. Contract Type and Deliverables.

All proposed costs must be in accordance with the U.S. Government Cost Principles under FAR Part 31.

The cost proposals must include:

1. A spreadsheet that lists each deliverable per **Section 6. Contract Type and Deliverables** and the proposed payment price for each deliverable.
2. The Offeror must provide a detailed budget showing major line items such as salaries, allowances, travel cost, and any other direct costs. The budget must show unit prices, quantities, and total price.
3. The cost proposal shall also include a budget narrative that explains the basis for the estimation of each cost element or line item. Supporting information must be provided in sufficient detail and include unit cost information to allow for a complete analysis of each cost element or item. IESC shall request additional cost information if the Evaluation committee has concerns of the reasonableness, necessity, and realism of an Offeror's proposed cost.
4. If it is an offeror's regular practice to budget an indirect rate for overhead costs, the Offeror must explain the rate and the rate's base of application in the budget narrative. IESC reserves the right to request additional information to substantiate an Offeror's indirect rate.

Cost proposals are not assigned points, but for overall evaluation purposes of this RFP, technical evaluation factors other than cost, when combined, are considered approximately equal to cost factors. If technical scores are determined to be equal or nearly equal, cost will become the determining factor.

12. Source of Funding, Authorized Geographic Code, and Source and Origin

Any subcontract resulting from this RFP will be financed with USAID funding and will be subject to U.S. Government and USAID regulations.

All goods and services offered in response to this RFP or supplied under any resulting award must meet USAID Geographic Code 937 in accordance with the United States Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), 22 CFR §228, available at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2012-title22-vol1/pdf/CFR-2012-title22-vol1-part228.pdf>.

The cooperating country for this RFP is Georgia.

Offerors are prohibited from doing business with any source that is suspended, debarred, or sanctioned by the US government, and must fall within our geographic codes of 937 and 110.

Offerors also must not offer, or supply telecommunications equipment or services prohibited by Section 889 of the U.S. Government's National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The list of prohibited companies as defined by the U.S. Government under Section 889 is as follows:

- Huawei Technologies Company
- ZTE Corporation
- Hytera Communications Corporation
- Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Company
- Dahua Technology Company

and associated subsidiaries or affiliates.

13. Deviations

IESC reserves the right to waive any deviations by offerors from the requirements of this solicitation that in IESC's opinion are considered not to be material defects requiring rejection or disqualification; or where such a waiver will promote increased competition.

14. Discrepancies

Please read the instructions carefully before submitting your proposal. Any discrepancy in following the instructions or contract provisions may disqualify your proposal without recourse or an appeal for reconsideration at any stage.

15. Conflict of Interest Declaration

The following steps outline IESC's contract selection process and should be understood by all Offerors to ensure the transparency of awards and avoid conflict of interest.

- 1) Request for Proposals (RFPs) are posted on IESC's website. The offer is open to all qualified offerors;
- 2) Clarifications will be emailed to all offerors submitting questions, as well as posted on IESC's website, simultaneously;
- 3) Once the proposals are received, an evaluation committee scores them;
- 4) Cost proposals are evaluated for reasonableness, accuracy, and completeness;
- 5) The best value proposal is selected based on a combination of the technical score and the cost;
- 6) No activity can be started until both IESC and the awardee have signed a formal contract; and,
- 7) IESC policy against fraud and code of business ethics exists throughout the life of the subcontract and beyond. Even if the contract is closed, if any party is found guilty of fraud, IESC will make a full report to the USAID Office of Inspector General, which may choose to investigate and prosecute guilty parties to the fullest extent of the law.

Any contracts awarded will be required to comply with all administrative standards and provisions required by the Award made from USAID.

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