

# Terms of Reference (ToR)

## National Consultant

*Mid-Term Review (MTR), CHeber – Skills Development in Kyrgyzstan (SDK), Phase I (2023–2027)*

### 1. Introduction

These Terms of Reference define the role and contribution of the National Consultant in supporting the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the CHeber project. The MTR is a key moment in the project cycle, serving accountability, learning, and strategic steering purposes. It assesses progress at mid-term and provides recommendations for the remaining implementation period and future phases. The review is conducted in line with OECD DAC evaluation criteria and SDC standards and is implemented by a team consisting of an International Consultant (Team Leader) and a National Consultant. Within this setup, the National Consultant plays an important role in ensuring that the evaluation is grounded in the national context and informed by relevant stakeholders.

### 2. Purpose of the assignment

The role of the National Consultant in this assignment is to support the effective implementation of the MTR by bringing strong contextual knowledge and facilitating access to information and stakeholders. The role is not only operational but also analytical, contributing to the interpretation of findings and the formulation of realistic recommendations.

In practical terms, the National Consultant will:

- Ensure that the evaluation reflects the Kyrgyz institutional and labor market context
- Support stakeholder engagement and data collection processes
- Contribute to analysis and interpretation of findings
- Help ensure that recommendations are context-sensitive and feasible

### 3. Scope of work

The National Consultant will be involved throughout the entire evaluation process, covering the period under review (May 2023 – April 2026) and all project regions and sectors. The work spans preparation, fieldwork, and analysis, and is carried out in close collaboration with the International Consultant.

The scope of work includes:

- Supporting desk review and preparation
- Facilitating and conducting field data collection
- Contributing to analysis and reporting
- Contributing to briefing and de-briefing meetings (presentations) with (for) Project Team and Embassy

### 4. Specific roles and responsibilities

The evaluation is carried out as a joint effort between the International Consultant and the National Consultant. Their collaboration is based on complementary strengths: the International Consultant provides methodological leadership and overall responsibility, while the National Consultant ensures contextual relevance and effective implementation at country level.

#### 4.1. Overall roles and accountability

Clear roles are essential to ensure both efficiency and quality. While the evaluation is collaborative, accountability remains distinct.

The International Consultant (Team Leader) is responsible for:

- Designing the evaluation methodology and framework
- Leading analysis and synthesis of findings
- Ensuring quality assurance
- Drafting and finalizing all deliverables

The National Consultant is responsible for:

- Providing contextual and sector-specific expertise
- Facilitating access to stakeholders
- Coordinating and conducting fieldwork
- Supporting analysis and interpretation of findings

#### **4.2. Collaboration across evaluation phases**

The collaboration between both consultants evolves across the different phases of the evaluation, with each phase requiring a slightly different balance of roles.

***Inception Phase:*** During the inception phase, both consultants jointly shape the evaluation design. The International Consultant leads the methodological aspects, while the National Consultant ensures that the approach is realistic and adapted to the country context.

Key areas of collaboration include:

- Reviewing project documents and policy frameworks
- Refining evaluation questions and tools
- Identifying and mapping stakeholders, incl. donor mapping
- Preparing and conducting a survey to collect data from stakeholders and beneficiaries prior to field visits
- Planning the field mission

***Fieldwork Phase:*** The fieldwork phase relies heavily on the National Consultant's role in facilitating access and ensuring smooth implementation. At the same time, the International Consultant ensures analytical consistency.

The National Consultant:

- Organizes interviews and site visits
- Facilitates stakeholder access
- Conducts or co-conducts interviews and focus groups
- Supports translation and cultural interpretation

The International Consultant:

- Guides interviews and ensures alignment with methodology
- Probes key issues and emerging themes
- Maintains analytical consistency

Interviews should be conducted jointly. Where necessary, the National Consultant may take the lead, especially in local language settings (in the regions).

***Analysis Phase:*** The analysis phase is based on continuous exchange between both consultants. This ensures that findings are both methodologically sound and contextually accurate.

- Findings are jointly discussed and validated
- The National Consultant contributes contextual interpretation
- The International Consultant structures and consolidates the analysis

**Reporting Phase:** The reporting phase is led by the International Consultant but relies on structured inputs from the National Consultant. This ensures both analytical quality and contextual relevance.

The International Consultant: (i) drafts and finalizes the report and ensures coherence and compliance with standards, while the National Consultant (i) provides inputs to context and findings sections and (ii) reviews drafts and provides feedback. Both consultants contribute to workshops and presentations as well as briefing and de-briefing with project team and Embassy

### **4.3. Coordination, accountability and decision-making**

Effective coordination is critical for a smooth evaluation process. The working relationship is based on regular communication and clear leadership. The International Consultant is the lead and assumes overall responsibility and quality assurance of the evaluation. S/he leads the final methodological decisions, consolidation of findings, and final content of deliverables. The National Consultant maintains regular communication on fieldwork progress, stakeholder engagement, and emerging issues. The National Consultant is directly accountable to the International Consultant during the whole assignment.

### **4.4. Quality assurance**

Quality assurance is ensured through a combination of clear leadership and collaborative validation. While the International Consultant holds final responsibility, the National Consultant plays a key role in strengthening the quality of the outputs. The International Consultant ensures overall quality and consistency. The National Consultant supports verifying contextual accuracy, validating findings against local realities, and identifying gaps or inconsistencies.

## **5. Deliverables**

The National Consultant contributes to all key deliverables of the MTR, under the leadership of the International Consultant. These include:

- Inputs to the inception report (including processed survey data from stakeholders and beneficiaries prior to field visits)
- Fieldwork documentation (notes, summaries)
- Contributions/inputs to draft inception and final reports
- Support to briefing/de-briefing meetings, presentations, surveys, focus group discussions and validation workshops

## **6. Timeframe and level of effort**

The assignment is expected to be carried out over the period April to June 2026, with a total level of effort of up to 20 working days. The workload is distributed across preparation, fieldwork, and reporting. Indicative allocation of time is planned for (i) preparation and desk review (~4 days), fieldwork (~12 days) and analysis and reporting (~4 days).

## **7. Required Qualifications**

The National Consultant is expected to bring a combination of evaluation expertise and strong knowledge of the Kyrgyz context.

Key requirements include:

- University degree (Bachelor's or Master's) in a field relevant to the project and/or evaluation
- Experience in evaluating development projects using OECD DAC criteria
- Good command in evaluation/assessment tools of development projects and programmes
- In-depth knowledge of the Kyrgyz VET, VSD system and labor market
- Familiarity with private sector engagement and skills development
- Strong analytical and facilitation skills

- Strong writing skills in English
- Prior records of development projects' evaluations in KG or in the region of CA
- Fluency in English, Russian and Kyrgyz

## **8. Reporting and institutional arrangements**

The National Consultant works under the technical leadership of the International Consultant and in coordination with the project team and Swiss Embassy. The role requires independence, objectivity, and professional integrity throughout the assignment. The National Consultant will be sub-contracted by the International Consultant.

## **9. Logistics and support**

The project team will support the National Consultant by facilitating access to stakeholders, organizing meetings, and providing relevant documentation required for the evaluation.

## **10. Ethical Considerations**

The assignment must be carried out in line with professional and ethical standards. This includes ensuring confidentiality, obtaining informed consent, and applying a gender-sensitive and inclusive approach throughout the evaluation process.