*Annex 2*

Georgia I2Q - Innovation, Inclusion and

Quality

Competitive Innovation Fund

Assessment Criteria and

Guidelines for Evaluators

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# OVERVIEW OF THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The assessment of CIF Grant proposals is a **two-stage process:**

1. **Eligibility and completeness evaluation**

The CIF Administration Unit (AU) is responsible for checking eligibility and completeness of the submitted proposals. Eligibility and completion checks will be generated by filling out the checklists (see *Part 1: Applicant eligibility checks*) and must be completed within 2 weeks of the Call closing.

When an applicant is asked to submit more information, they must send this within 3 working days. The CIF AU must check the additional information within a further 2 working days.

Only fully completed, signed, and electronically submitted Applications should be considered for further evaluation. When an applicant has not supplied all the information necessary to prove their eligibility in the time-frame permitted then they will be notified by the CIF AU and their applicant will not be evaluated further in the Call.

All applicants will be notified by the CIF AU by email of the results of the eligibility checks after 2 weeks. Applicants that are not satisfied with the outcome will be referred to the Grievances Redress Mechanism as envisaged in Operational Manual (OM) for CIF.

1. **Proposal review and selection**

Eligible proposals will be evaluated by the Evaluators. Each proposal will be evaluated by a minimum of 2 Evaluators, one of which should be an international Evaluator, using the criteria laid out below in *Part 2: Evaluation criteria and guidelines for evaluators.*

In a case of significant differences between the individual evaluators' scores (when the difference is at least 4 points or when the proposal was rated more than 14 points by one individual evaluator and 14 points or less by another), Consulting Company responsible for evaluating grant proposals on the project selection stage 2: Proposal review (hereafter: Consulting Company) should ensure the participation of a third evaluator in the evaluation process.

The CIF AU will send applications to the Consulting Company by email in order to carry out the project selection stage 2: Proposal Review. The Consulting Company must confirm by email within 5 days of the applications being sent out that they have received the documents. If a CoI is declared, the Consulting Company must send the application to another potential evaluator and repeat the process until no CoI is confirmed.

The Consulting Company will have 5 weeks to complete all assessments from the point they are received. This time-frame may be extended by Ministry of Education and Science (MES) in consultation with the AC depending on the number of applications that have been received, the size of the pool of Evaluators and the number of reported CoIs that have resulted in a need to transfer proposals to another evaluator.

Evaluators will record the results of each assessment using the template provided below in *Part 2: Evaluation criteria and guidelines for evaluators*.

Each applicant will initially receive their mark, their position in the overall ranking and the summary of the Evaluators’ feedback on the main strengths and weaknesses of the application.

# PART 1: APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY CHECKS

If the answer to any of the questions below is **No** then the application should be referred to the head of the CIF Administration Unit (AU) who will decide if missing information can be requested.

1. **Has the applicant completed all sections of CIF Draft Proposal Submission Form?**

🞏 Yes:

🞏 No:

1. **Has the applicant submitted a copy of the Strategic Development Plan with the project proposal?**

🞏 Yes:

🞏 No:

1. **Is the grant application built around one or more academic programs?**

🞏 Yes:

🞏 No:

*If yes has the program(s) been demonstrated to have been accredited by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE).*

🞏 Accreditation (full or conditional) decision publicly available on the NCEQE website

🞏 No:

1. **Project Partners**
2. National HEIs

For each national HEI partner carry out the following checks:

**Has the HEI partner been demonstrated to be authorized by NCEQE?**

🞏 Yes.

🞏 No:

1. Foreign HEIs

For each Foreign HEI partner carry out the following checks:

**Has the Foreign HEI partner been demonstrated to be authorized by their national accreditation agency (document or link provided)?**

🞏 Yes. A link to an authorization decision has been supplied and this is acceptable.

🞏 Yes. An authorization document has been supplied and this is acceptable.

🞏 No. No information to confirm their status has been supplied and/or the information supplied is not deemed acceptable.

1. **Non HEIs (all other partners)**

For each non HEI partner carry out the following checks:

**Has the legal status of the partner been supported with a suitable registration document?**

🞏 Yes. A registration document has been supplied and this is acceptable.

🞏 Yes. A link to registration document has been supplied and this is acceptable.

🞏 No. No information to confirm their legal status has been supplied and/or the information supplied is not deemed acceptable.

1. **Has the applicant submitted a copy of the following documents?**

* Submission statement
* Budget (Excel)
* CVs of named individuals
* Implementation plan (Excel Gantt chart)
* Project Deliverables and Monitoring Plan
* Citizen Engagement Plan
* Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by all partners
* Consortium agreement (if application involves more than one applicant)
* Confidentiality agreement – Applicant

🞏 Yes:

🞏 No:

1. **Has the application form been signed by the Rector of the HEI or a person with authorisation to sign?**

🞏 Yes:

🞏 No:

1. **Has the consortium agreement been signed by all consortium members?**

🞏 Yes:

🞏 No:

# PART 2: EVALUATION CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATORS

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based on 4 main criteria:

1. Quality and relevance of the proposal with an emphasis on the innovation aspect;
2. Quality of Partnership;
3. Team composition and budget;
4. Implementation Plan and Sustainability.

For evaluation purposes the main criteria are divided into the sub-criteria as follows:

Criteria 1: Quality and relevance of the proposal with an emphasis on the innovation aspect - should be evaluated using the following two sub-criteria:

1.1: Project’s quality

1.2: Project’s strategic justification

Criteria 2: Quality of Partnership- should be evaluated using the following two sub-criteria:

2.1: Partnership formation approach and objectives

2.2: Quality of partnership/consortium as a whole

Criteria 3: Team composition and budget - should be evaluated using the following two sub-criteria:

3.1: Team composition

3.2: Budget

Criteria 4: Implementation Plan and Sustainability - should be evaluated using the following two sub-criteria:

4.1. Implementation plan

4.2. Sustainability

All proposals should be evaluated according to the 4 main criteria graded by the Evaluators from Excellent to Fail.

The grades will automatically be translated in to associated mark based on the rubric below:

0 – Proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.

1 – Poor. The criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses.

2 – Fair. The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.

3 – Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.

4 – Very good. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.

5 – Excellent. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

To evaluate each of the main criteria, the sub-criteria are first scored separately from 1 (fail) to 5 (excellent) using the rubric given above. An average score obtained as a result of the sub-criteria evaluation will formulate the overall score for the corresponding main criteria.

The possible maximum score for each project evaluation is 20 points. Proposals that have an average score of 14 points or less by the two Experts (or three Experts, in the case of three expert participants in the evaluation process) shall not be eligible for funding and shall not be reflected in the overall ranking list of projects.

It is of utmost importance that only the criteria as described in the application form and these guidelines are used to assess the proposals. Evaluators should refrain from using any additional criteria and each proposal should be given equal treatment.

Evaluators should also provide a succinct explanatory comment substantiating each mark. Comments should take the form of a statement and explanation of key strengths and key weaknesses of the proposal, in the light of the evaluation criteria.

As these comments will be sent to the applicant as feedback, they should be of good quality, brief but substantial. They should also be constructive in helping the applicant to improve their CIF Grant proposal ideas and applications skills. They must also be impeccably polite.

**Evaluators must adhere to the following guidelines:**

* Use dispassionate, analytical and unambiguous language.
* Use grammatically correct, complete, clear sentences with no jargon.
* Provide polite comments.
* Critical comments should be constructive and not offensive.
* Avoid self-declaration of insufficient expertise (personal or panel) or non-confidence in the proposal.
* Avoid reference to the applicant's age, nationality, gender, or personal matters.
* Avoid making reference to scores in the comments.
* Avoid any direct comparison with any other proposals.
* Avoid any reference or comparison with previous assessments.
* Avoid comments that give a description or a summary of the proposal.
* Avoid dismissive statements about the Project Team Leader, project team members, or the project.

## Conflict of interest

Evaluators must declare immediately to the Consulting Company if they identify any potential CoI in assessing a project. The project will be allocated to another Evaluator.

## Confidentiality

All Evaluators are required to be bound by the terms of the attached confidentiality agreement.

## GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATORS

## Evaluation criteria 1: Quality and relevance with an emphasis on the innovation aspect

*Guidelines for assessing this section:*

* **Assess the project’s quality:**

• Are the objectives clear and pertinent to the topic?

• Are the objectives measurable and verifiable?

• Are the objectives realistically achievable?

• Is the proposed work innovative, ambitious and goes beyond the state-of-the-art in the context of Georgia?

* **Assess the project’s strategic justification:**

• Are the objectives linked to the institution’s strategic plan and HEI´s SWOT?

• Is the project developed so that it responds to the relevant needs and priorities of HEI?

• Are project objectives clearly linked to the broader policy framework, and relevant strategic context?

• What is the envisioned impact of the project on the higher education programs, learning environment and strengthening the labour market linkages?

## Evaluation criteria 2: Quality of Partnership

*Guidelines for assessing this section:*

* **Assess partnership formation approach and objectives:**

• Does the proposal explain the process by which the partnership (or consortium) were built and how the final composition has influenced the design of the proposal?

• Is it explained how will the partners get the maximum benefit from the project implementation?

• Does the partnership match the project’s objectives?

* **Assess the quality of partnership/consortium as a whole:**

• Are the project partners complementing one another, does each of them have a valid role?

• Do the project partners have knowledge, experience, capacity, and access to critical infrastructure needed to carry out the project activities?

## Evaluation criteria 3: Team composition and Budget

*Guidelines for assessing this section:*

* **Assess the Team composition:**

• Does the qualification of the project manager and the team correspond to assigned responsibilities?

• Does the submitted documentation clearly demonstrate the project team capabilities?

• Does the project team have sufficient scientific and technical potential to carry out the project and achieve its goals?

• Does the project team have an adequate organizational structure to ensure effective communication for implementation of the project?

* **Assess the proposed budget:**

• Are the resources allocated to the work packages in line with their objectives and deliverables? Does the budget accurately reflect the implementation plan?

• Is the essence and proportion of co-financing clearly described and project costs to be covered by the grant source clearly demarcated?

• Are the planned costs justified, credible and realistic?

## Evaluation criteria 4: Implementation plan and Sustainability

*Guidelines for assessing this section:*

* **Assess the proposed implementation plan:**

• Does the plan ensure that activities including duration, sequencing and links between activities are clear, measurable and feasible?

• Are project activities logically set out, well-described and relevant to the expected results?

• Is the project organization well defined to achieve project objectives?

• Are critical risks, relating to project implementation, identified and proper risk mitigation measures proposed?

* **Assess the sustainability of the proposed activity:**

• Does the project provide a clear understanding regarding the sustainability of the achieved results (e.g., how the good practices generated throughout the project will be systematized)?

• How it will be ensured that the purchased equipment is effectively used after the completion of the project?

• Does the project provide a clear vision of future costs that reflects the possibilities of internal and external funding separately?

***Template for assessments***

Each assessor should provide a succinct explanatory comment substantiating each mark. Comments should take the form of a statement and explanation of **key strengths and key weaknesses** of the proposal, *in the light of the evaluation criteria*.

As these comments will be sent to the applicant as feedback, they should be of good quality, brief but substantial. They should also be constructive in helping the applicant to improve their ideas and applications skills. They must also be impeccably polite.

**Template:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Number:** |  | | | | **Project name:** |  |
| **Criteria** | | **Sub-criteria** | **Score for sub-criteria** | **Overall Score** | **Comment** | |
| **1: Quality and relevance with an emphasis on the innovation aspect** | | 1.1: project’s quality |  |  | 1.1: | |
| 1.2: project’s strategic justification |  | 1.2: | |
| **2: Quality of Partnership** | | 2.1: Partnership formation approach and objectives |  |  | 2.1: | |
| 2.2: Quality of partnership/consortium as a whole |  | 2.2: | |
| **3: Team composition and Budget** | | 3.1: Team composition |  |  | 3.1: | |
| 3.2: Budget |  | 3.2: | |
| **4: Implementation Plan and Sustainability** | | 4.1: Implementation Plan |  |  | 4.1: | |
| 4.2: Sustainability |  | 4.2: | |
| **Total Score:** | |  | | | **Overall comment:** |  |

# CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT [[1]](#footnote-1)

**THIS AGREEMENT** [the Agreement] is entered into on this [X] day of [X 202X] by and between:

1. Ministry of Education and Science represented by XX and

1. Name of Expert, [Date of Birth] hereinafter referred to as [the Recipient]

**WHEREAS:**

The Discloser and Recipient hereto desire to work together to assess applications to the CIF Grant scheme.

Throughout the aforementioned activity, the Discloser may share proprietary information or Confidential Information with the Recipient subject to the terms and covenants set forth below.

**NOW IT IS AGREED AS FOLLOWS:**

**Clause 1. Confidential Information**

1.1 For the purposes of this Agreement, Confidential Information means any data or proprietary information of the Discloser that is not generally known to the public or has not yet been revealed, whether in tangible or intangible form, whenever and however disclosed, including, but not limited to:

(i) any scientific or technical information, invention, design, process, procedure, formula, improvement, technology or method;

(ii) any concepts, samples, reports, data, know-how, works-in-progress, designs, drawings, photographs, development tools, specifications, software programs, source code, object code, flow charts, and databases;

(iii) any marketing strategies, plans, financial information, or projections, operations, sales estimates, business plans and performance results relating to the Discloser’s past, present or future business activities, or those of its affiliates, subsidiaries and affiliated companies;

(iv) trade secrets; plans for products or services, and customer or supplier lists;

(v) any other information that should reasonably be recognized as Confidential Information by the Discloser.

1.2 The Discloser and the Recipient agree hereby that Confidential Information needs not to be novel, unique, patentable, copyrightable or constitutes a trade secret in order to be designated Confidential Information and therefore protected.

1.3 Confidential Information shall be identified either by marking it, in the case of written materials, or, in the case of information that is disclosed orally or written materials that are not marked, by notifying the Recipient of the confidential nature of the information. Such notification shall be done orally, by e-mail or written correspondence, or via other appropriate means of communication.

1.4 The Recipient hereby acknowledge that the Confidential Information proprietary of the Discloser has been developed and obtained through great efforts and shall be regarded and kept as Confidential Information.

1.5 Notwithstanding the aforementioned Confidential Information shall exclude information that:

(i) is already in the public domain at the time of disclosure by the Discloser to the Recipient or thereafter enters the public domain without any breach of the terms of this Agreement;

(ii) was already known by the Recipient before the moment of disclosure (under evidence of reasonable proof or written record of such disclosure);

(iii) is subsequently communicated to the Recipient without any obligation of confidence from a third party who is in lawful possession thereof and under no obligation of confidence to the Discloser; (iv) becomes publicly available by other means than a breach of the confidentiality obligations by the Recipient (not through fault or failure to act by the Recipient);

(iv) is or has been developed independently by employees, consultants or agents of the Recipient (proved by reasonable means) without violation of the terms of this Agreement or reference or access to any Confidential Information pertaining to the Discloser.

**Clause 2. Purpose of the Disclosure of Confidential Information**

The Discloser and Recipient will work together to assess applications to the CIF Grant scheme.

**Clause 3. Undertakings of the Recipient**

3.1 In the context of discussions, preparations or negotiations, the Discloser may disclose Confidential Information to the Recipient. The Recipient agrees to use the Confidential Information solely in connection with purposes contemplated in this Agreement and not to use it for any other purpose or without the prior written consent of the Discloser.

3.2 The Recipient will not disclose and will keep confidential the information received. The Recipient will be responsible for ensuring that the obligations of confidentiality and non-use contained herein will be strictly observed and will assume full liability for the acts or omissions made but its personnel representatives or agents.

3.3 The Recipient will use the Confidential Information exclusively for the permitted purpose stated in clause 2 and not use the information for its own purposes or benefit.

3.4 The Recipient will not disclose any Confidential Information received to any third parties, except as otherwise provided for herein.

3.5 The Recipient shall treat all Confidential Information with the same degree of care as it accords to its own Confidential Information.

3.6 All Confidential Information disclosed under this Agreement shall be and remain under the property of the Discloser and nothing contained in this Agreement shall be construed as granting or conferring any rights to such Confidential Information on the Recipient. Principally, nothing in this Agreement shall be deemed to grant to the Recipient a licence expressly or by implication under any patent, copyright or other intellectual property right. The Recipient hereby acknowledges and confirms that all the existing and future intellectual property rights related to the Confidential Information are exclusive titles of the Discloser. For the sake of clarity based in good faith, the Recipient will not apply for or obtain any intellectual property protection in respect of the Confidential Information received. Likewise any modifications and improvements thereof by the Recipient shall be the sole property of the Discloser.

3.7 The Recipient shall promptly return or destroy all copies (in whatever form reproduced or stored), including all notes and derivatives of the Confidential Information disclosed under this Agreement, upon the earlier of (i) the completion or termination of the dealings contemplated in this Agreement; (ii) or the termination of this Agreement; (iii) or at the time the Discloser may request it to the Recipient.

3.8 Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Recipient may retain such of its documents as required to comply with mandatory law, provided that such Confidentiality Information or copies thereof shall be subject to an indefinite confidentiality obligation.

3.9 In the event that the Recipient is asked to communicate the Confidential Information to any judicial, administrative, regulatory authority or similar or obliged to reveal such information by mandatory law, it shall notify promptly the Discloser of the terms of such disclosure and will collaborate to the extent practicable with the Discloser in order to comply with the order and preserve the confidentiality of the Confidential Information.

3.10 The Recipient agrees that the Discloser will suffer irreparable damage if its Confidential Information is made public, released to a third party, or otherwise disclosed in breach of this Agreement and that the Discloser shall be entitled to obtain injunctive relief against a threatened breach or continuation of any such a breach and, in the event of such breach, an award of actual and exemplary damages from any court of competent jurisdiction.

3.11 The Recipient shall immediately notify upon becoming aware of any breach of confidence by anybody to whom it has disclosed the Confidential Information and give all necessary assistance in connection with any steps which the Discloser may wish to take prevent, stop or obtain compensation for such a breach or threatened breach.

3.12 The Confidential Information subject to this Agreement is made available "as such" and no warranties of any kind are granted or implied with respect to the quality of such information including but not limited to, its applicability for any purpose, noninfringement of third party rights, accuracy, completeness or correctness. Further, the Discloser shall not have any liability to the Recipient resulting from any use of the Confidential Information.

3.13 The Discloser is not under any obligation under this Agreement to disclose any Confidential Information it chooses not to disclose.

3.14 Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to constitute an agency, partnership, joint venture, or other similar relationship between the Discloser and Recipient.

**Clause 4. Miscellaneous**

**4.1 Duration and Termination**

4.1.1 This Agreement shall remain in effect until XX 2025. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Recipient’s duty to hold in confidence Confidential Information that was disclosed during the term shall remain in effect indefinitely, save otherwise agreed.

**4.2 Applicable Law and Jurisdiction**

This Agreement shall be construed and interpreted by the laws of Republic of Georgia.

**4.3 Validity**

If any provisions of this Agreement are invalid or unenforceable, the validity of the remaining provisions shall not be affected. The invalid or unenforceable provision shall be replaced by a valid and enforceable provision that will meet the purpose of the invalid or unenforceable provision as closely as possible.

**4.4 Subsequent Agreements**

Ancillary agreements, amendments or additions hereto shall be made in writing.

**4.5 Communications**

Any notices or communications required may be delivered by hand or e-mail, mailed by registered mail to the address of the Recipient/Discloser as indicated above. Any subsequent modification of addresses should be reasonably communicated in advance to the effect of this Agreement.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, the Parties hereto have caused this Non-Disclosure Agreement to be executed as of the date stated above.

[Insert name of representatives]

[Signatures]

Done at [place] on [date]

1. The Confidentiality agreement is provided as a template. The agreement (content, structure, etc.) will be finalized by the selected Consulting Company and the modified content will be coordinated with the CIF administrative unit. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)