

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (INDIVIDUAL CONSULTING SERVICES)

Federated States of Micronesia

FSM Skills and Employability Enhancement Project

Grant No.: D-9870

Assignment Title: Development of Operational procedures for Career Counseling and Training Materials

Reference No. (as per Procurement Plan): FM-NDOE-453363-CS-INDV

The National Department of Education received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the FSM Skills and Employability Enhancement Project and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services.

The consulting services (“the Services”) include conducting a thorough review of current practices, develop unified operational procedures for career counseling, and provide specialized training for counselors at the state level. These efforts are designed to improve the effectiveness of career guidance and ensure that counselors are better equipped to support students in both academic and career planning . Specifically, the Consultant will provide support in the following areas:

- Development of Operational Schools Career Guidance Procedures
- Development and Implementation of a High School Career Guidance and Job Matching Strategy
- Development of Career Guidance Resources for High Schools
- Training of Master Trainers (MToT) Program for High School Career Counselors

The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment is annexed to this REOI *and* can be found at the FSM Department of Finance and Administration (DOFA) website’s Career Opportunities page at <https://dofa.gov.fm/vacancies/>.

The National Department of Education now invites eligible individuals (“Consultants”) to indicate their interest in providing the Services.

Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services by submitting:

- **A current curriculum vitae/resume** with a description of experience in similar assignments and conditions
- **A cover letter** with a concise summary of their qualifications and relevant work experience

The criteria for selecting the Consultant are:

Mandatory requirements

- A master's degree in education, counseling, or a related field.
- At least 10 years of experience in career counseling or guidance, with a minimum of 7 years specifically in vocational education and training.
- Strong understanding of best practices in career counseling, including job matching and vocational education pathways.
- Proven experience in designing and delivering effective training programs for educators in career counseling or guidance.

Desirable requirements

- Familiarity with the educational and cultural context of the FSM or similar regions.
- Ability to effectively mentor and support career counseling practitioners in their professional development.

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to paragraph 3.14, 3.16 and 3.17 of the World Bank's *Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers* Fifth Edition, September 2023 ("the Regulations"), setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours 8am to 5pm (local time).

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form with the latest CV/resume and work sample(s) to the address below by e-mail **by 5pm on Thursday, November 28, 2024 Pohnpei time**.

FSM National Department of Education

Attn: Hyunjeong Lee, Project Manager

P.O. Box PS 87, Palikir, Pohnpei, FM 96941

Tel: +691-320-5219

E-mail: hyunjeong.lee@national.doe.fm with a copy to angelyne.aten@national.doe.fm and ciu.dofa@gov.fm

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Project Name	FSM Skills and Employability Enhancement Project
Grant Number	D-9870
Implementing Agency	FSM National Department of Education
Contract Name	Development of Operational procedures for Career Counseling and Training Materials
Contract Reference Number	FM-NDOE-453363-CS-INDV

1. Background

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) is committed to enhancing its vocational education offerings in high schools, particularly in response to the growing demand for skilled professionals in various industries. To support this effort, the National Department of Education (NDOE) is implementing the Skills and Employability Enhancement (SEE) Project, which focuses on developing occupational profiles, curricula, and apprenticeship programs aligned with industry needs. The project also seeks to build the capacity of educators, strengthen school-industry partnerships, and equip students with market-relevant skills to enhance their employability. Specifically, the SEE Project consists of the following three main components:

- **Component 1: Improving equitable access to vocational education and training.** The objective of this component is to ensure TVET access to all eligible youth, especially the poor and vulnerable youth, women, persons with disabilities, and geographically disadvantaged groups such as students or trainees from outer islands. The component aims to achieve this by expanding the availability of quality skills training while providing information, incentives, and support to increase participation of under-represented and disadvantaged groups in TVET.
- **Component 2: Improving the relevance and quality of TVET.** The objective of this component is to enhance the relevance and quality of training offered by TVET institutions by upgrading the training curricula and its standards; improving the quality of trainers; and making provisions for independent testing and certification of skills.
- **Component 3: Improving labor market information and employment services.** This component aims to establish capacity within the Government to provide labor market information and employment support services with a view to improve labor market outcomes among potential workers—including TVET graduates—in FSM. To this end, the activity will support schools and relevant Government units, and the SDOEs, in their efforts to match jobseekers with appropriate vacancies through comprehensive job search assistance.

One of the primary challenges is that counselors are often assigned additional tasks beyond their core responsibilities, hindering their ability to focus on addressing students' needs. Many counselors are better equipped to handle disciplinary matters rather than provide comprehensive career guidance, which should be their main focus. Moreover, there is a lack of clarity regarding the role of career counselors in supporting the implementation of on-the-job training or apprenticeship programs, and the number of counselors is often insufficient, with some handling entire grade levels alone.

As states invest in employment counseling for graduates, the NDOE seeks to enhance local career counseling program design by incorporating successful global models which highlight the importance of personalized

guidance, strong industry partnerships, and access to accurate labor market data. Key elements of an effective career counseling program include integrating soft skills and core competencies, promoting lifelong learning, and addressing barriers such as mental health issues. Additionally, emphasizing work-based learning and rigorously tracking outcomes can significantly contribute to the long-term career success of vocational education program graduates.

To address these challenges and enhance the effectiveness of career counseling services, the NDOE aims to review current practices in each state, develop unified operational procedures, and provide targeted training to state-level career counselors and school personnel.

2. Objective

To address these systemic issues, the NDOE aims to conduct a thorough review of current practices, develop unified operational procedures for career counseling, and provide specialized training for counselors at the state level. These efforts are designed to improve the effectiveness of career guidance and ensure that counselors are better equipped to support students in both academic and career planning.

3. Scope of Work

The following tasks are expected to be undertaken:

Scope	Objective/Key Activities
3.1. Development of Operational Schools Career Guidance Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and implement standardized career guidance procedures for high schools across the FSM. These procedures should define the roles, responsibilities, and processes for career counselors, with a focus on aligning career guidance with the academic and vocational pathways available to students. • Ensure that the procedures address key aspects of career counseling, including student career planning, guidance on post-secondary education options, and job search strategies. • Collaborate with key stakeholders such as state education departments and high school administrators to tailor the procedures to the unique needs of each state while maintaining national consistency. • Incorporate lessons from regional and international evidence on delivering effective career counseling programs for high schools, while ensuring that the proposed models are applicable to the FSM context.
3.2. Development and Implementation of a High School Career Guidance and Job Matching Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a high school-focused career guidance and job matching strategy that helps connect students with career opportunities, job shadowing, internships, and apprenticeships in FSM. • Develop a clear framework that counselors can use to assist students in making informed career decisions, with special emphasis on vocational education pathways and local employment opportunities.
3.3 Development of Career Guidance Resources for High Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a variety of career guidance materials specifically for high school students, including resources for career exploration, job search strategies, and career planning. These materials should place particular emphasis on vulnerable communities and be designed to align with the new TVET curricula expected to be developed between 2025 and 2026.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the resources are adaptable to the unique contexts of the different states and reflect the educational and labor market needs across FSM.
3.4 Training of Master Trainers (MTOT) Program for High School Career Counselors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a series of MTOT program designed to equip high school career counselors, school leadership and the government with the skills necessary to deliver effective career guidance and to train their peers. The program should focus on improving counselors' ability to guide students through career exploration, post-secondary options, and job readiness.

4. Expected Deliverables and Tentative Timeline

Based on the tasks outlined in the scope of work, this assignment is expected to be conducted for the period of **January 2025 – September 2025**:

Deliverable	Output	Travel	Tentative Timeline
1. Inception Report	Detailed work plan outlining the methodology, key stakeholders, and timelines.	Not required	January 2025 (Within 2 weeks of contract start)
2. High School Career Guidance Procedures	Standardized career guidance procedures for high schools in FSM, including roles, responsibilities, and processes for career counselors.	Required for all four states	March 2025 (2 months after inception report)
3. High School Career Guidance and Job Matching Strategy and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A job matching strategy tailored to high school students, focusing on local career opportunities, apprenticeships, and post-secondary education pathways. A set of adaptable career guidance resources for high school students, addressing career exploration, post-secondary options, and job readiness. 	Required for stakeholder consultation	May – June 2025 (1 month after procedures development)
4. MTOT Program for High School Counselors	Development and delivery of an MTOT program for high school career counselors, with accompanying training materials.	Required (tentatively in Yap)	July or August 2025 (1 month after resources are completed)
6. Final Report and Recommendations	A final report summarizing outcomes, the implementation of career guidance procedures, and training results, along with recommendations for sustainability.	Not required	September (1 month after MTOT/mentoring phase concludes)

4.1 Key Deliverable Review process

The NDOE and the PIU will review all key deliverables within 14 business days from the date of submission. Any feedback or required revisions will be communicated promptly to the consultant to ensure timely adjustments.

4.2 Document Transfer

All deliverables will be submitted by the consultant electronically via email and Google Drive to ensure easy access for the NDOE and SEE Project team.

5. Qualifications

5.1 Mandatory Requirements

- A master's degree in education, counseling, or a related field.
- At least 10 years of experience in career counseling or guidance, with a minimum of 7 years specifically in vocational education and training.
- Strong understanding of best practices in career counseling, including job matching and vocational education pathways.
- Proven experience in designing and delivering effective training programs for educators in career counseling or guidance.

5.2 Desirable Requirements

- Familiarity with the educational and cultural context of the FSM or similar regions.
- Ability to effectively mentor and support career counseling practitioners in their professional development.

6. Selection Process

The selection process includes review of EOI and potential interviews. Expected timing for the selection process will be communicated upon shortlisting of candidates.

7. Resources provided by the NDOE

The Project Implementation Unit is available to extend logistical support for the required travels.