Terms of reference for the external midterm evaluation of the Better Education for Africa’s Rise II (BEAR) II project 2017-2021

1. Background of the project

The Better Education for Africa’s Rise (BEAR) project is a joint initiative between UNESCO and the Republic of Korea to improve the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) systems of five beneficiary countries in Eastern Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania) during 2017–21. Within the framework of the 2030 Education Agenda and the UNESCO Strategy for TVET 2016-21, the project was conceptualised in response to the target countries’ needs based on national development plans and national education and training strategic plans.

The BEAR II builds on the previously implemented BEAR I project (2011-2016) that has yielded positive and sustainable outcomes in five countries of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), namely Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi, Namibia and Zambia.

The evaluation of the BEAR I project contributed greatly to the formulation of the BEAR II intervention in Eastern Africa. Based on the recommendations of the BEAR I evaluation exercise, a strong focus has been placed on mobilising local and regional level expertise to conduct activities under the BEAR II project in order to ensure that the intervention is highly relevant to the local situation and needs of countries. Furthermore, the project also has a strong regional dimension through which it aims to capitalise on regional experience, and facilitate knowledge exchange and peer learning among the beneficiary countries.

The focus of the intervention under the BEAR II project is to give young people in Eastern Africa a better chance of accessing decent employment or of generating self-employment, through improvements in the TVET systems of the beneficiary countries. A broad range of activities are planned and being conducted under the framework of the project, corresponding to the following three result areas:

i. increasing the relevance of TVET to the needs of the economy by developing training curriculums to respond to market demand of skills, based on labour market analyses;

ii. enhancing the quality of TVET delivered to trainees by building capacities of TVET trainers and institutions, through needs based training programmes; and

iii. improving the perception of TVET among young people, enterprises and society, therefore making it a more appealing education option, by developing or enhancing systems of career guidance and counselling, and/or skills competition and/or skills gateways.

The project aims at developing capacities within the ministries, private sector and other institutions responsible for TVET in the beneficiary countries. Sustainable partnerships are to be established between TVET systems and stakeholders in the economy as well as within the economic sub-region of Eastern Africa by encouraging cross-country cooperation between countries, in order to ensure that the impact of the project outlasts its period of implementation.
The main features of the BEAR II project are as follows.

- **Sector skills approach**: The BEAR II project focuses on TVET provision in selected economic sectors. The project aims at strengthening the TVET governance model within a specific target sector in each country, which can subsequently be adopted by other sectors in an appropriate manner. The BEAR II target sectors were selected in line with economic priorities in each of the beneficiary countries. The intervention will be carried out in close cooperation with experts in the chosen sector.

- **Pilot project**: The BEAR II project has been designed as a pilot with a select set of beneficiary institutions in a given economic sector. The objective of the pilot initiative is to improve or develop appropriate technical mechanisms that can subsequently be scaled within the larger TVET sector.

- **Regional cooperation**: The BEAR II project intends to go beyond country level progress towards initiating peer learning and knowledge sharing at the regional level of eastern Africa based on the outcomes of project activities in beneficiary countries.

- **Decentralised implementation**: The project implementation in beneficiary countries is coordinated by the UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa in Nairobi, while UNESCO Headquarters conducts the overall monitoring and supervision, provides technical support, and is responsible for coordinating the external evaluations of the project. This arrangement aims at ensuring closer contact with stakeholders and beneficiaries at country level for effective implementation.

In addition to supporting the five beneficiary countries in the Eastern Africa region, a small portion of the project also continues to support follow-up activities in the five BEAR I countries in Southern Africa. However, follow up activities in BEAR I countries will not be covered within the scope of the midterm evaluation process.

### 2. Rationale of the evaluation

The BEAR II project is a five-year project (2017-2021) that will reach its midterm in 2019. UNESCO’s evaluation policy calls for an independent midterm evaluation of its projects, conducted by external evaluators. The external evaluation of the project as per UNESCO’s evaluation policy has been agreed upon in the MOU signed with the Republic of Korea. The midterm evaluation will cover the period from 2017 to 2019 in order to assess various aspects of the project, including the relevance of the project and its progress to date, efficiency and effectiveness of implementation, and its approach for sustainability, at country level and if relevant at regional level. The lessons highlighted and recommendations for improvement in implementation, especially regarding the above listed aspects will be taken strongly into account to adjust and reshape the project intervention, as relevant, over the remaining duration.

*The evaluation process will be conducted under the guidance of the Internal Oversight Service (IOS) of UNESCO.*
3. Objective of the midterm evaluation

The objective of the evaluation is to examine the current execution status of the project, assess progress towards intended outcomes, identify enabling and inhibiting factors, and provide evidence based recommendations and corrective measures. The evaluation will inform decision making about the remaining duration of the project in order to improve the effectiveness of implementation.

More specifically, the evaluation is expected to:

- Measure progress and identify ways to strengthen the achievements and outcomes of the project;
- Assess the efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources based on the scope and quality of the outputs delivered, the beneficiaries reached, and contribution towards intended outcomes;
- Assess the relevance and sustainability of the interventions conducted in the framework of the BEAR II project;
- Identify lessons and suggest action-oriented recommendations that will help to re-shape programming and implementation strategies for the remaining duration of the project.

The findings of the evaluation will be used by key stakeholders of the project, including UNESCO project coordinators and the donor country, the Republic of Korea, to inform critical decision making to facilitate the success of the project. The findings of the evaluation will be shared with beneficiary countries’ Steering Committees and Technical Committees, to help them strengthen their role as active implementers of the project.

4. Scope of the evaluation and questions:

The BEAR II project proposed various activities under three main result areas for each of the five beneficiary countries, in order to achieve its specific and overall objectives. The progress of the BEAR II project should be evaluated based on the progress made in terms of planned actions, activities and results.

The evaluation exercise will critically assess and provide recommendations for improvement in the following areas:

i. Relevance of the project
   - Has the BEAR II project been aligned with national priorities and reform processes of each of its beneficiary countries? If yes, how? If no, why not?
   - At the moment of the evaluation, to what extent is the BEAR II project still relevant to national priorities and skills needs in the labour market, given the political and economic changes that have taken place in the beneficiary countries, since the inception of the project?
   - To what extent has the BEAR II project been aligned with and is complementary to other regional initiatives in the field of skills development for employment?
   - How have key public sector entities (e.g. relevant ministries, national authorities, training institutions, etc.) been consulted and involved in the design of the project?
   - How have key private sector entities (e.g. industrial bodies, employers’ association, trade unions, etc.) been consulted and involved in the design of the project?
- How have the stakeholders of the BEAR II project coordinated with other development partners in the field of skills development for employment at country level? To what extent are the planned activities and expected outputs of the project consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?
- Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the intended outcomes especially relevant to the employability of TVET trainees?

ii. **Effectiveness of the project in the selected beneficiary institutions**
- Are the planned project activities on track and what results/outputs have been achieved in each of the beneficiary countries? Explain with the status of key performance indicators in the results monitoring framework.
- What evidences of the above have been observed in the result areas of BEAR II project: (i) labour market analysis and curricula design in the priority sector(s); (ii) capacity development of teachers/trainers and managers; and (iii) career counselling/guidance, and/or skills competition and/or skills gateway? If no major changes have been observed in these areas, explain the reasons why.
- What key public sector entities (e.g. relevant ministries, national authorities, training institutions, etc.) have been involved with the implementation of the BEAR II project, in the midterm?
- What key private sector entities (e.g. industrial bodies, employers’ association, trade unions, etc.) have been involved with the implementation of the BEAR II project in the midterm?
- What are the major factors, internal or external, influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the BEAR II project objectives in the midterm for the projects? And how?

iii. **Efficiency of the project**
- How efficient is the project management approach and the coordination structure of the project at national, regional and global level?
- How efficient are the project communication and reporting channels?
- How efficient are the overall administration/management/monitoring of the project? Are adequate monitoring tools and mechanisms in place, and functional? Do they allow for communication and exchange of lessons learned between the different projects?
- Are the established quality assurance mechanisms adequate?
- Have the project budget and resources been adequate for the activities of the project?
- Have the project activities been implemented cost-efficiently? What measures have been taken to ensure that resources are effectively used?
- Have the project activities been implemented in a timely manner?
- Are the current implementation modalities of the BEAR II project adequate for the achievement of the project’s results? How could these be improved for better efficiency and effectiveness?

iv. **Sustainability of the project**
- How are capacities being strengthened at individual and institutional levels through the project so that relevant organisations or government bodies are better equipped to perform as champion institutions in key areas of: (i) labour market analysis and curricula design; (ii) capacity development of teachers/trainers and managers; and (iii) career counselling/guidance, and/or skills competition and/or skills gateway?
- What measures, technical and financial, are foreseen to ensure that key relevant stakeholders continue the BEAR II activities beyond the lifetime of the project?
- To what extent has local expertise been mobilized by the project in the beneficiary countries?
- What are the main factors that facilitate or threaten the (financial, political and institutional) sustainability of the activities and outcomes of the project?
- Which other development partners and funding mechanisms have been mobilised to support the BEAR II project and how, in order to ensure the sustainability of the project beyond the project period?
- How has the visibility of the BEAR II project, the donor and UNESCO been ensured among key stakeholders and the target beneficiaries in the beneficiary countries?

In addition to answering the above questions, the evaluator will be required to review the monitoring and evaluation framework of the BEAR II project and suggest improvements concerning the performance indicators in order to strengthen the tool for future monitoring and evaluation of the project.

5. Activities to be undertaken to conduct the evaluation

The activities of the assignment will be to:

- Undertake desk research of all pertinent documents including (but not limited to) the project formulation reports, quarterly progress reports by country, annual progress reports, monitoring and evaluation framework, work plan documents etc.
- Produce an inception report including the refined Theory of Change, the evaluation framework, the evaluation methodology describing the data collection method(s), the detailed work plan and logistical arrangements.
- Undertake field missions to the five beneficiary countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Tanzania and Uganda). Each field mission will last no longer than 3 days and will involve conducting meetings, interviews, and consultations with key national stakeholders of the BEAR II project. This will include UNESCO project officers (at regional and country levels), UNESCO National Commission representatives, national stakeholders (e.g. national counterparts at various levels, project steering committee and technical committee members, participants of seminars, etc.) in the beneficiary countries, visit beneficiary institutions and direct beneficiaries (if any), hired technical experts, representatives of development partners, and representatives of relevant industry/employer associations.
- Conduct interviews and consultations with the BEAR II coordination team, relevant TVET programme specialists at UNESCO Headquarters, and representatives of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea.
- Produce a country evaluation report for each of the five countries visited.
- Present the findings of the Midterm Evaluation physically or via teleconference to various key actors, including the project management team, UNESCO IOS and representatives of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea.
6. Deliverables

The evaluators will be responsible for the coordination and production of the following deliverables.

**Deliverable 1:** Inception report including the refined theory of change or intervention logic, the evaluation methodology and detailed work plan for answering the evaluation questions (which will require adjustment and fine tuning as per context) (max. 10 pages).

**Deliverable 2:** Produce five draft individual country reports informed by the missions (2-3 days per country) and desk research, including information about participation of the country in regional activities (max. 10 pages per country). The draft country reports will be finalised after incorporating feedback from UNESCO.

Indicative structure of the report:
- Executive Summary
- Project description (country specific)
- Project Evaluation purpose and methodology
- Project implementation status (including information on country specific and regional level participation)
- Findings
- Recommendations
- Annexes (providing an adequate level of evidence to sustain the findings and recommendations including interview list, details of the data collection instruments, key documents reviewed)

**Deliverable 3:** Draft of synthesised midterm evaluation report compiling findings in all five countries (max. 30 pages excluding annexes), indicatively structured as follows.

- Executive summary
- Project description
- Evaluation purpose
- Evaluation methodology
- Findings
- Recommendations (including an improved monitoring and evaluation framework template)
- Annexes (detailed country reports with more details as the basis for the overall summary evaluation report)

The evaluators will present the findings and recommendations to the reference group, physically or via teleconference, which will contribute to discussion about the future orientations of the project.

The role of the reference group is to advise the Secretariat on the methodology and on the recommendations of the evaluation. It will include the project management at national, regional and Headquarters level, the UNESCO IOS as well as representatives of the MoE of the Republic of Korea.

**Deliverable 4:** Final synthesised midterm evaluation report of the BEAR II project. (max. 30 pages)

All deliverables must be written in English except the Madagascar country report that should be in French. Country specific project documents and official documents for Madagascar will also be in French. All draft deliverables will require approval from UNESCO before the continuation of the evaluation.
The evaluation reports will take into account the UNEG (United National Evaluation Group) Quality Checklist for Evaluation reports and the UNESCO Evaluation Report Guidelines.

7. Timeframe

The evaluation process will be conducted over the period December 2019 – March 2020 (keeping in mind the winter break from end of December to mid-January particularly in the African context). An initial planning and desk review will be followed by field trips to the beneficiary countries to do relevant consultations, interviews and assessments. The final evaluation report and the presentation of findings should be provided by end of March 2020.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Indicative schedule of main activities</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Selection of external evaluation team</td>
<td>Early December 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Inception Report (including the refined Theory of change or intervention logic, the evaluation methodology and detailed work plan)</td>
<td>Mid-December 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Data Collection and Field visits</td>
<td>Mid Jan- Mid Feb 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Country reports</td>
<td>End-February 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Draft mid-term evaluation report</td>
<td>Mid-March 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Presentation of main findings and tentative recommendations to the reference group</td>
<td>Mid-March 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Final mid-term evaluation report</td>
<td>End-March 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Remuneration

The number of man-days estimated for the assignment is approximately 45. The evaluation team will not be remunerated on the basis of the number of working days completed and other costs occurring, but rather the firm will receive a lump sum according to its technical and financial proposal by deliverable submitted. The financial proposal should therefore include all costs necessary to provide the services, including the remuneration of the evaluation team and field missions (travel costs and per diem).

9. Reference Documents

The following key documents constitute the major points of reference for this evaluation:

- BEAR II project formulation report (2017)
- Country wise formulation reports (2017)
- Annual operational work plans
- BEAR II Country quarterly progress reports
- BEAR II Bi annual progress reports
- Monitoring and evaluation framework
- Project outputs (E.g. Labour Market Information System mappings, labour market analysis outputs, training needs analyses etc.)
10. **Conditions for the Evaluation**

**Responsibilities of the evaluators**
- Treat project related and evaluation documents in a confidential manner.
- Return all documents to the concerned UNESCO secretariat.
- Ask for permission before giving any information on the evaluation to third parties.
- Provide for evaluation related logistics such as office space, telecommunication, printing of documentation, etc.
- Coordinate evaluation missions to beneficiary countries in coordination with UNESCO.
- Explain and discuss as required the findings of the evaluation with the project coordinators.

**Responsibilities of the BEAR II team at UNESCO Headquarters**
- Provide key project documents for the purpose of the evaluation.
- Provide contact information and facilitate contacts with country coordinators and stakeholders.
- Ensure availability to cooperate with the evaluation team and review each deliverable.

**Responsibilities of UNESCO staff at the regional and country level**
- Provide documents (outputs) and comprehensive information on their activities concerning project implementation.
- Facilitate contact with stakeholders in the respective countries as required.
- Ensure availability to cooperate with the evaluation team.

11. **General Guidelines and Selection Criteria**

All eligible technical proposals will be evaluated on the basis of their responsiveness to the TOR. They will be assessed following objective technical criteria under three categories: (i) expertise of firm/institution, (ii) proposed work plan and approach, and (iii) qualification and experience of the evaluation team. Specifically, the following selection criteria will be applied to proposals under each category:

(i) **Expertise of Firm/Institution submitting proposal**

*Mandatory*
- A minimum of three projects/evaluations successfully implemented/conducted in support of education in developing countries. In addition, it is mandatory that firms/institutions include in the proposal two examples of relevant evaluation reports recently completed, as relevant as possible to the subject of the evaluation, particularly in the field of education and/or TVET.

*Desirable*
- Concrete international experience in programme/project evaluation, especially with UNESCO and/or the UN System, including the World Bank is desirable.

Firms/institutions are required to provide evidence that support the mandatory and relevant desirable criteria met. Proposals with additional references/proof of evidence to the minimum requirements will be prioritised.

(ii) **Proposed work plan and approach**

The evaluation team shall present in its proposal the work plan and approach intended for the evaluation. Particular attention will be paid to how well understood and defined the scope of the task
is. Proposals will thus be reviewed according to four criteria that will consider aspects related to the following questions:

- To what extent does the firm/institution understand the task in relation to the objectives and requirements set out in the TOR?
- Is the presentation clear and is the sequence of activities and the planning logical, realistic and promise efficient/on time submission of deliverables?
- To what degree does the proposal guarantee an innovative approach to the evaluation and provide a fresh look on the relevance and effectiveness of the Pilot?
- Is the quality of examples/samples of previous evaluations relating to the subject of current evaluation in line with methodology requirements as set in the TOR?

(iii) Qualifications and experience of the evaluation team

Mandatory for all members of the evaluation team:

- An advanced university degree in education, international development or specialized fields of social sciences, humanities, public policy, or related areas.
- At least five years of working experience in evaluation, including in the field of education or TVET in the African context.
- Excellent data analysis skills.
- Proficiency in English and a good understanding of French.
- No prior involvement in the design, planning or implementation of any of the activities under review.

Mandatory for the team leader:

- Extensive knowledge and at least nine years of professional experience in development evaluation and experience in applying qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods in programme and project evaluation (with significant experience in evaluating education projects in developing countries).
- In-depth understanding and extensive knowledge of issues pertaining to global trends of the education and training sector, particularly to discussions and issues related to the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda.
- Oral and writing skills in English to the highest standards and good proficiency in French.

Mandatory for one of the members of the evaluation team

- Previous experience with, and understanding of, capacity development approaches, particularly in support of the TVET sector in developing country context.
- Excellent understanding and knowledge of labour market and TVET related issues.
- Excellent proficiency in French.

Desirable qualifications:

- Previous experience in TVET in Eastern Africa.
- Multicultural evaluation teams with appropriate gender balance and geographic and cultural diversity.
- Knowledge and understanding of the UN system and other international organizations and experience from evaluating UNESCO education programmes.
- Understanding of UN mandates in Gender Equality issues.

Evaluation teams are required to provide evidence that support the mandatory and relevant desirable criteria met. All references/proof of evidence should be included in electronic copy inside the technical
proposal sealed envelope. Proposals with additional references/proof of evidence to the minimum requirements shall be prioritised.

All interested firms must send their technical and financial proposals to a.kaur@unesco.org and ws.kim@unesco.org, latest by Friday, 6 December 2019.