

## TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR EXPERTS

Terms of reference for on-site activities and missions

**Action code and partner country:** SOCIEUX 2019-19 KYRGYZSTAN

**Action title:** *Strengthening employment opportunities of persons with disabilities in Kyrgyzstan*

**Partner institution:** *The Ministry of Health Kyrgyzstan / NGO Ravenstovo*

**Activity number and title:** *Activity 4- The development of the communication strategy of the Information Support Centre for students with disabilities*

**Date of implementation of activities:**

*Activity 4 : From September, 15, 2021 on, to be determined (remote)*

**Expert positions and responsibilities (by activity):**

Activity 4: Expert1 (*principal*) – Workers with Disabilities, Communication

Activity 4: Expert2 – Workers with Disabilities, Change management

**Workload:**

Activity 4 - Expert 1 : 19 days

Activity 4- Expert 2 : 19 days

**Call for experts' reference:** 19-19/KGZ/4

**Version - #:**

Draft

Final

27 July 2021

SOCIEUX+ is implemented by

Partnership led by:



Co-financed by the European Union

## 1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 1.1 Country overview

The Kyrgyz Republic is a country located in the eastern region of Central Asia, where it covers a total area of 77,202 square miles, lower-middle-income country of 6.3 million people. Of this area, approximately 3.6% is made up of various bodies of water. One of these bodies of water is Issyk Kul Lake, which is the second largest mountain lake in the world. The geographic terrain of Kyrgyzstan consists primarily of mountains, and 80% of the country's land is covered by the Tian Shan Mountain range. The entire area of Kyrgyzstan is politically divided into 7 regions and 2 autonomous cities. Kyrgyzstan sharing borders with China, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The capital is Bishkek.

Kyrgyzstan has rich endowments, including minerals, forests, arable land, and pastures, and there is significant potential for the expansion of its agriculture sector, hydroelectricity production, and tourism industry. In 2018, GDP per capita (current \$) was 1277, life expectancy at birth was 70,7 years. The economy is vulnerable to external shocks owing to its reliance on one gold mine, Kumtor, which accounts for about 10 percent of GDP, and on worker remittances, equivalent to about 27 percent of GDP in 2018.

The country has experienced instability since independence in 1991. Corruption and nepotism were major stress factors underlying political and social upheavals in 2005 and 2010. To prevent the concentration of power, a parliamentary constitution with elaborate checks and balances was adopted in late 2010, making the Kyrgyz Republic the only Central Asian country in which the president is limited to a single term. The president first elected under this constitution served a full six-year term. Following peaceful elections, President Sooronbai Jeenbekov took office in November 2017. He stepped down on October 15, 2020, as a result of people's protests against the results of parliamentary elections that gave the majority to the establishment parties.<sup>1</sup> The newly nominated by the opposition Prime Minister Sadyr Japarov, is also holding the President's office as interim. A new government was formed as well.

A baseline scenario projects a decline in real GDP of 5.5 percent in 2020. Growth is forecast to rebound to 4.8 percent in 2021 as domestic activity recovers with the likely availability of a vaccine and as external demand improves. Growth is projected to slow to 4.5 percent in 2022. With the stabilization of the exchange rate, inflation is expected to be within the range of 5–6 percent. The current account deficit is projected to widen to about 12 percent of GDP in 2020, reflecting lower non-gold exports and reduced remittances. However, it is expected to narrow to around 9 percent of GDP in 2021–22. The fiscal deficit is projected at 7.1 percent of GDP in 2020. Over the medium term, the authorities expect the fiscal deficit to decline to 3 percent of GDP. Fiscal consolidation would require measures to expand the tax base, roll back pandemic-related expenditures, and streamline non-priority purchases. Under a downside scenario, which assumes a second wave of the coronavirus in November, real GDP is expected to contract by 8 percent in 2020, with the current account and fiscal deficits deteriorating to around 14 percent and 8 percent of GDP, respectively.<sup>2</sup>

Kyrgyzstan ranks 112<sup>th</sup> according to the last Human Development Index (2019).<sup>3</sup> A full third of Kyrgyzstan's population is under the age of 15 and one-third of the population lives in urban areas with the majority living in rural areas. The largest ethnic group are the Kyrgyz, a Turkish people, who account for 72% of the population. Other ethnic groups in Kyrgyzstan include Russians (9.0%), Uzbeks (14.5%), Dungans (1.9%), Uyghurs (1.1%), Tajiks (1.1%), Kazakhs (0.7%), and Ukrainians (0.5%). There are more than 80 different ethnic groups in total in Kyrgyzstan. There hasn't been much change in the rate of growth in the recent past, but things are expected to slow somewhat in the years to come. Current projections believe that the annual growth rate will peak in 2020 at 1.45% before slowly declining. In 2050, it is expected that the population will be growing around 0.6% annually. These calculations state that the population in Kyrgyzstan will be roughly 6,301,718 in 2020, 6,997,284 in 2030, 7,596,178 in 2040, and 8,112,653 by 2050.<sup>4</sup>

Social protection in Kyrgyzstan covers a broad range of risks, receives a significant proportion of government funding and plays a critical role in alleviating poverty. However, provision is unevenly distributed; expenditure on social insurance is approximately five times higher than spending on

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kyrgyzrepublic/overview>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kyrgyzrepublic/overview#3>

<sup>3</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/KGZ>

<sup>4</sup> <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/kyrgyzstan-population/>

social assistance, while social services and labour market policies for vulnerable workers are extremely small. Moreover, important gaps in social protection coverage exist, particularly for the urban poor, young people and the significant numbers of workers employed abroad. The national poverty rate remains high. It soared post-independence, declined rapidly in the early 2000s, stabilised at around 30% between 2008 and 2015 and then dipped to 25.4% in 2016. A large proportion of the population remains vulnerable: in 2015, 35% of the population had income between the national poverty line and 1.5 times that level. Broader measures of deprivation have shown signs of improvement after provision of basic services deteriorated dramatically following independence. Financial constraints limit the quality of services, especially in rural areas. Income inequality rose sharply in the years following independence but has since fallen. Social protection, including both contributory and non-contributory programmes, is the largest function group in terms of public expenditure. It accounted for 28.0% of total public spending in 2015, more than spending on education (17.0% of total spending) and health (9.2%) combined.<sup>5</sup>

## 1.2 Sector situation

Actually, the disability system in Kyrgyz Republic is regulated by several laws: The Constitution; Law on the general social protection for the population; Law on the rights and guarantees for the disabled persons; Law on the social benefits; Law on the employment of the population; Law on the public purchases for disabled persons; Labour code. These documents ensure the social, medical and professional integration of disabled to society and indicates active labour markets measures.

The Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic guarantees social support and protection to all its citizens. Article 16 of the Constitution states the principles that no one shall be subject to discrimination by gender, disability, age, education and other circumstances. The access to primary education for all children is guaranteed in Article 45. The Kyrgyz Labour Code also contains protective measures for persons with disabilities. According to Article 315 of this Code, state employment services should play a central role in referring persons with disabilities into employment. This Article also prohibits discrimination of employers on the basis of disability. An official quota of 5% is set for employing persons with disabilities in Article 314 of the Code. Article 28 of the law on rights and guarantees of people with disability further explains the disability employment quota and related reporting. This quota applies to all employers with more than 20 employees. However, there are limited mechanisms of realizations.

On 31 October 2018, the President of Kyrgyz Republic (order No. 221) approved The National Strategy of the development of the Kyrgyz Republic 2018-2040. In this Strategy is clear indicated: the economic policy of the state will be focused on providing employment, stable income, creating productive jobs taking into account all future challenges in the labor market; application of innovative and environmentally friendly technologies; in the event of a difficult life situation, every citizen will timely receive comprehensive, integrated, flexible and targeted social support, including a complex of various social services; the system of social services for disadvantaged children and families, people with disabilities, senior citizens has been developed in all regions; the task is set to strengthen the system of social support of disadvantaged children and families, people with disabilities, elderly people living alone in order to prevent, timely detect difficult life situations and take effective measures; it is necessary to provide access of vulnerable groups to rehabilitation and social services based on modern digital technologies; to reform the system of medical and social expert examination providing for transition to international functional standards and approaches; to ensure transparency and improve targeting of the system of social protection of the population; a flexible model of labor relations will be created in the country that meets the requirements of the new economy; it is important to introduce effective and active measures to ensure employment.

There are special legislation and articles in the general legislation aimed at creating conditions for the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities. Their principle is to ensure equal opportunities of persons with disabilities on an equal basis with other citizens. Several related legislation shall be noted: Law on rights and guarantees of people with disabilities; Law on the basis of social servicing of the population in the Kyrgyz Republic; Law on Employment Promotion; Law on protection of health of citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic; the Resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic of September 16, 2011, No. 422 approved the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that was signed on September 21, 2011.

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<sup>5</sup> OECD (2018), Social Protection System Review of Kyrgyzstan, OECD Development Pathways, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264302273-en>

In addition, quotas for disabled (not less than 5 percent in legal entities, where the number of employees consists more than 20 employees) are applicable according Labour law and municipalities decisions. In 2018, there was 601 disabled, employed by quotas. For 2019, quota for 615 working places approved in whole territory of Republic. During III quarter of 2019, 169 disabled were employed by the employment agency.

In the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "On the rights and guarantees of persons with disabilities" and the Regulations "On the recognition of persons with disabilities" there is a provision for individual rehabilitation program in the first or the next disability examination. Despite this, the individual rehabilitation program in Kyrgyzstan does not work due to 1) lack of implementation mechanisms, 2) lack of specialists, and 3) lack of funding for individual rehabilitation programs.

According to official statistics from 2016, there are 6.1 million people in the Kyrgyz Republic, of which 172,000 are people with disabilities and 28,000 are children with disabilities under the age of 18. In 2013, there were 166,870 and in 2015 167,138. The total number of persons with disabilities is gradually increasing.

Poverty is more prevalent among households that include people with disabilities. While 21.9% of households were below the consumption poverty line in 2014, the rate was 26.9% of households with at least one member with a disability. Individuals with disabilities face great difficulty in finding employment: 2.3% were in some form of employment, with the majority registered as pensioners.<sup>6</sup>

Historically people with disability face with discrimination and their rights are severely violated in social protection, employment and education sectors. There is a profound stigma against persons with disabilities (according to the UNDP reports) as persons with disabilities have been largely segregated in institutions and at home. The state disability policy has long been based primarily on the disability pension scheme. Only people with visual and hearing disabilities were provided with employment opportunities in workshops in institutions. People with other disabilities have not been taken into account. Kyrgyzstan became signatory to it in 2011. After the signing of the CRPD, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic has approved a number of national programs that comply with the CRPD such as "A set of actions to ensure the rights and improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2014-2017"; the "Social Protection Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2012-2014"; the "Social Protection Development Programme of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2015-2017", which ended in 2017. However, in these legal documents, instruments are missing to support employers in the employment of people with disabilities. There is hardly any program in the country to specifically support persons with disabilities beyond disability benefits and social services. This legacy of Soviet Union has left huge problems for persons with disabilities in receiving education and further employment.

Due to the legacy of Soviet Union, Kyrgyzstan still has segregation policy for children and persons with disabilities. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has created a momentum for its member states to make increasing efforts in disability inclusion. Kyrgyzstan is not an exception. On the one hand, the Kyrgyz government started to take disability inclusion more seriously and has been implementing deinstitutionalization project (EU Technical Assistance project) and disability inclusion in university teaching curriculum of social work discipline (EU Social Protection Systems Program). On the other hand, the Kyrgyz disability movement and their representative organizations have been supporting income generating activities of persons with disabilities especially since early 2000s.

Today more support is necessary for persons with disabilities to first gain qualifications through professional trainings at higher education institutions and subsequently to be competitive in the open market on an equal basis with others. More professionally skilled persons with disabilities need to be employed in an open market to become role models to other persons with disabilities, to showcase disability inclusion in practice, and to eventually normalize disability inclusion discourse in Kyrgyz society.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, there have been different kinds of project initiatives in education and employment for people with disabilities especially by disability organizations and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs). According to law "On the promotion of employment" states that the right to receive high education, retraining and advanced training on a priority basis have persons with disabilities.

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<sup>6</sup>OECD (2018), Social Protection System Review of Kyrgyzstan, OECD Development Pathways, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264302273-en>

Public Employment Services act as a gatekeeper for labour market policies, assisting with job searches and connecting the unemployed with micro-credit, but are constrained by a lack of information on the labour market. The largest active labour market policy is public works programmes, which are implemented in a highly decentralised manner and overwhelmingly employ men rather than women. An unemployment benefit exists but the value is extremely low and strict eligibility criteria mean it is paid to a very small number of the unemployed.

Organisation for economic cooperation and development (OECD) highlights following recommendations: i) catalogue and analyse existing implementation of public works programmes; ii) design a national strategy and policy framework for public works programmes at the same time as enhancing Ministry of labour and social development capacity in this area; iii) establish participation quotas for women, the youth and people with disabilities and ensure skills acquisition is mainstreamed into projects; iv) ensure the involvement of local communities and administrations in identifying participants and designing activities to ensure that projects are useful; v) set up stringent monitoring and evaluation systems to assess their impact. In addition, the low coverage, low financing and minimal impact of active labour market policies are major constraints on the promotive impact of social protection and restricts its ability to break the inter-generational transmission of poverty. It should be considered scaling up public works programmes as the most direct means of supporting individuals excluded from the labour market. Local government should be at the forefront of identifying appropriate projects but central government would need to be far more involved in the sector.<sup>7</sup>

Currently the situation has been slowly changing because of increasing understanding of disability issues, as in March 2019, the country ratified the UN Convention. The Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Labour and Social Development social protection consider that the implementation of the proposed project will be very beneficial to forge inter-sectoral collaboration among social protection, education and employment sectors.

### 1.3 Role of partner institution in the sector

The Ministry of labour and social development of Kyrgyzstan is in charge of elaborating and implementing policies in the labour and social security sectors. The Department of people with disabilities and elderly people at the Ministry of Labour and Social Development of the Kyrgyz Republic is in charge of the present request of assistance to SOCIEUX+. It is responsible, among other duties, for designing and outsourcing programs directed to improve social protection and inclusion of persons with disabilities. The Ministry of Education and Science is in charge of education in general.

Both Ministries started to increase interests on disability inclusion and have good collaborative partnership with organizations of persons with disabilities as well as with higher education institutions. Both Ministries are highly responsible duty-bearers for strengthening employment opportunities of persons with disabilities through educational and social protection means respectively. Although both Ministries started to be highly interested in disability inclusion, particularly that in the employment sector, they do not have enough capacity to materialize that in practice. They are in good positions as responsible duty-bearers to call for the current collaborative projects that disability inclusion is strengthened in the employment sector.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, there have been different kinds of project initiatives in education and employment for people with disabilities especially by disability organizations and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs). "Ravenstvo", an organization of persons with disabilities, could be the main local partner to achieve the set objectives and to implement the Action. In addition, the association of Social Entrepreneurs of Kyrgyzstan plays an important role in linking the education and employment sectors.

Collaborative institutions: EU Technical Assistance Programme in Kyrgyzstan; EU Delegation in Kyrgyzstan.

***Needs and gaps*** :The Union of people with disabilities „Ravenstvo“ (with authorisation of the Ministry of Labour and social development of Kyrgyzstan) has submitted the request of assistance to SOCIEUX+ in order to strengthening employment opportunities of persons with disabilities in

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<sup>7</sup>OECD (2018), Social Protection System Review of Kyrgyzstan, OECD Development Pathways, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264302273-en>

Kyrgyzstan. Beneficiaries of action are the Ministry of Labour and social development and the Ministry of Education and science of the Kyrgyz Republic. The objective of the request is to strengthen access to employment of persons with disabilities through disability inclusion in higher education in the Kyrgyz Republic and through creating links between education and employment sectors.

#### Challenges and problems:

1. *Employment and unemployment.* Unemployment rate of persons with disabilities, however, remain very high due to the legacy of Soviet Union and the continuing segregation policy of the government. Today more support is necessary for persons with disabilities to first gain qualifications through professional trainings at higher education institutions and subsequently to be competitive in the open market on an equal basis with others. More professionally skilled persons with disabilities need to be employed in an open market to become role models to other persons with disabilities, to showcase disability inclusion in practice, and to eventually normalize disability inclusion discourse in Kyrgyz society.

We can mention several problems: active labour market measures are applicable only for 1 and 2 disability group (third group is considered as incapable for work); low professional capacities of disabled persons (because of their isolation from the education); working places not adapted; no transportation reimbursement; no subsidies for employers for the employment of low-skilled disabled persons; difficult to get into the working place because non-adapted city infrastructure.

Existing quota system is not effective because there is no administrative sanctions; low interest of disabled; the necessity for registration in the employment agency; the majority of disabled persons have not higher education, which is necessary for participation in quota system; low salaries, proposed by private sector's employers for working places under quota system.

Low number of the employment under the Employment agency measures. For example, during III quarter of 2019, 631 disabled (332 women) asked for the employment and only 27 percent employed; only 15 percent received the professional training; 17 percent started to work in the public works (with remuneration).

2. *Education.* Unfortunately, higher education institutions have not been largely striving for disability inclusion. With the aforementioned EU projects, it is a very recent development that some universities started to take a more comprehensive approach to disability beyond the mere medical approach to disability exemplified in defectology. As a result, students with disabilities struggle with their student lives without appropriate amount of reasonable accommodation for them to complete their education well, let alone to compete with peers without a disability in open market after the education. Therefore, in order to strengthen employment of persons with disabilities in Kyrgyzstan, it is imperative to support students with disabilities in higher education so that they will start to change the mainstream practice and discourse of development in Kyrgyzstan.

Several problems can be mentioned: the education facilities non-adapted; the discovery of disability is at the late phase; low inclusion; no tutoring; not elaborated curriculum; not enough technical needs; mixing integration and inclusion. In addition, only 13,6 percent of children with disabilities participate in the pre-school activities and there is the significant growth of children with disabilities in the country (growth of 42 percent from 1993 to 2017).

3. *Legislation.* In the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "On the rights and guarantees of persons with disabilities" and the Regulations "On the recognition of persons with disabilities" there is a provision for individual rehabilitation program in the first or the next disability examination. Despite this, the individual rehabilitation program in Kyrgyzstan does not work due to 1) lack of implementation mechanisms, 2) lack of specialists, and 3) lack of funding for individual rehabilitation programs.

Actually, the Priorities Action plan for the realisation of the Convention of the rights of people with disabilities and the creation of the governmental Council for disabled persons affairs is under drafting process.

4. *Inter-sectoral cooperation.* In the Kyrgyz Republic, there have been different kinds of project initiatives in education and employment for people with disabilities especially by disability organizations and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs). According to law "On the promotion of employment" states that the right to receive high education, retraining and advanced training on a priority basis have persons with disabilities. However, there is hardly any connection deliberately created between education and employment sectors.

5. *Management.* Public Employment Services act as a gatekeeper for labour market policies, assisting with job searches and connecting the unemployed with micro-credit, but are constrained by a lack of information on the labour market.

There is no common understanding in strategic planning on the importance of disability.

There are no standards for purchase of the equipment for disabled persons (for example, wheelchairs) and accessibility standards not applicable in practice

#### Relevant existing initiatives in the sector

Supporting the establishment of sustainable and inclusive social protection systems programme (EU-SPS) is co-financed by the European Union, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Government of Finland (EU Social protection system programme in Kyrgyzstan, 2018 (EU-SPS Project in Kyrgyzstan 2017-2018 (EU-SPS I)).

The first EU support to reform in education sector in the Kyrgyz Republic started in 2013 and lasted till end of 2015 with a 20 000 000€ sector budget support programme, of which 3 000 000€ were used for technical assistance and grants.

In addition, UN Women implementing the project aiming to reduce gender-based violence in the target communities (with EU contribution of 797 397 Eur).

Technical support is providing by German cooperation agency (GiZ Kyrgyzstan), EU member states (e.g. Finnish government), international organisations (UNICEF, United Nations, ILO, EU Technical assistance program) as well.

World bank project on the introduction and application of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF).

## **2 ACTION DESCRIPTION**

### **2.1 Overall objective**

To assess the existing policies and instruments of employment of persons with disabilities in Kyrgyzstan in order to promote employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and to establish an effective communication, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, creating links between education and employment sectors

### **2.2 Specific objective (s) (purpose)**

SO1. *To assess the latest policy developments and existing instruments of employment for persons with disabilities in relation to their qualifications in Kyrgyzstan and to propose related tools for the system's improvement: support for the preparation of personal assistant legislation, employment incentives, inclusive education tools, monitoring/evaluation tools; support for the preparation/implementation of the Priorities Action plan for the realisation of the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities and for the creation of the Council for disabled persons affairs.*

SO2. *To develop concept of information centre for workability criteria by matching the functional potentials with the requirements of employment positions and for providing technical support for strengthening employment opportunities for students in higher education.*

SO3. *To develop awareness raising policy, preparing relevant communication strategy for the Information Support Centre.*

### **2.3 Expected results**

ER1. PI has better understanding of the evaluation and impact of recent developments in the area of employment incentives for PwDs, as well as of possible improvements to this policy.

ER2. The PI and its partners have an understanding of the possible architecture and resources needed to set up a workability information center for higher education students with disabilities

ER3. A communication strategy of the Information Support Centre for higher education students with disabilities was elaborated

## 2.4 Final deliverables

- D1: A Communication strategy for the Information Support Centre for students with disabilities.
- D2: A Compendium of international and EU examples of national, local or institutional communication practices on the area of promoting studies and employability of people with disabilities.
- D3. An individual Expert Mission Report (ExMR) in SOCIEUX+ format;
- D4: An individual completed Expert Feedback Form (ExF) completed online (see instructions and link on the ExMR template).
- D5: A collective Activity Report (AcR) in SOCIEUX+ format

## 3 METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 General methodology (of the action)

The technical assistance methodology will be detailed, for each activity, by the mobilized experts. Notwithstanding this experts' responsibility, the overall methodology shall be centred on the international standards and EU best practice in the field of the employment/education tools strengthening for disabled persons (including the capacity building and monitoring). Experts shall take into account the whole bulk of work that has been achieved so far by Ministry of Labour and social development/Ministry of Education and Science, including through the cooperation displayed in partnership with the above-mentioned development partners.

This activity 4 comes after the activity 1 and activity 3 (act.2 study-visit is cancelled due to the pandemics). The experts will take into consideration the results of the activity 1 and activity 3 to ensure the coherence of technical assistance. This activity will take place remotely, the experts will have at their disposal a Zoom Pro account and can use other instruments (e-mail etc.)

### 3.2 Planned activities (work plan of the action)

The following activities are currently planned for the action:

- Activity 1 –Assessing the latest developments of the existing policies and instruments of employment for persons with disabilities in relation to their qualifications in Kyrgyzstan and proposing tools for improvement;
- Activity 2 – To organise the study visit to Finland (or other EU country) - cancelled;
- Activity 3 –The development of the concept of information centre for workability criteria by matching the functional potentials for students in higher education in Kyrgyzstan;
- Activity 4 – The development of the communication strategy and in the framework of EU best practice.

The present terms of reference cover the services expected for activities of the above work plan:

- Activity 4.

### 3.3 Inclusion of cross-cutting issues

SOCIEUX+ recognises the importance to include cross-cutting issues in social protection, labour and employment policies and systems. The following cross-cutting issues are duly taken into account:

- Gender equality;
- Good governance;



- Human rights (including rights of children, people living with disabilities, vulnerable groups and minorities); and,
- Social and economic inclusion of vulnerable groups.

## **4 ACTIVITIES DESCRIPTION**

### **4.1 Tasks**

The principal expert will lead the remote mission. He/she will be responsible for the delivery of all deliverables of the activity. He/she will be responsible for the preparation, coordination, implementation and reporting of the overall activity towards SOCIEUX+.

Minimum tasks expected from the experts shall include:

#### Preparation phase:

- 1) Experts will get substantial knowledge of the local context by reviewing relevant background documents provided by SOCIEUX+ and the Partner Institution, familiarise themselves with the SOCIEUX+ templates and materials, consider possible communications and knowledge management aspects of the activity.
- 2) A resource-person from the NGO Ravenstvo will be identified to guide experts and collaborate in the formulation of the methodology and agenda, for example by making a list of actors and their representatives available for interviews. He/she elaborate a list of the key-strategic actors to be interviewed (Partner's executives and staffs, as well and external actors).
- 3) A methodological note and agenda (intermediate deliverables) will be prepared by the team of experts, based on discussions with the resource persons and to be agreed by the partner institution.
- 4) A briefing meeting will be organised between experts and the SOCIEUX+ team ahead of the distance mission. The purpose of this meeting will be to validate the intermediate deliverables, to be approved by SOCIEUX+ team and clarify any other aspects to take into account, including possible communications and knowledge management opportunities. A separate meeting may be organised with SOCIEUX+ Communications specialist and/or the Knowledge development specialist as needed.
- 5) Ahead of the mission, experts may engage in exchanges with the EU Delegation office in Bishkek with the purpose of informing the delegation of the activity and gather supplementary information, as well as organizing a briefing and /or debriefing session.

#### Implementation phase:

- 1) Before starting the assessment process, the experts will revise and finalise the list of the key-strategic actors to be interviewed for the assessment, established by the resource person, and invitation will be launched by the PI;
- 2) The expert team will help the partner institution to develop a communication strategy for Information Support Centre students with disabilities in higher education.
- 3) The experts will present to the PI (as a webinar as well as a separate document) some of the EU good practices in the area of communication in order to promote inclusive higher education and workplace.
- 4) The experts can also interview external actors that can support the positive deployment of the mission, such as:
  - EU Social protection system programme in Kyrgyzstan, 2018 (EU-SPS Project in Kyrgyzstan 2017-2018 (EU-SPS I),
  - UN Women project, aiming to reduce gender-based violence in the target communities (with EU contribution);
  - German cooperation agency (GiZ Kyrgyzstan),
  - EU member states (e.g. Finnish government),
  - international organisations (UNICEF, United Nations, ILO, EU Technical assistance program);

- The World bank project on the introduction and application of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), etc).
- 5) During the implementation of the consultations, experts will disseminate evaluation online forms, to be compiled by the participants to the sessions (PAF). The effective compilation of these reports by participants is not under the Experts' responsibility.
- 6) At concluding the consultation process, the experts will present to the partner staffs the preliminary outcomes of the mission in order to take into account the Partner's remarks in view of the finalization of the final deliverables (technical note and recommendation). This may be done for example by organising a follow-up consultation or a plenary session.
- 7) Depending on the visibility and/or knowledge development opportunities identified in the preparation with the SOCIEUX+ team, experts may channel to SOCIEUX+ any material that can be useful to inform the public about the activity (pictures, interviews, brief notes or articles), as well as take short videos introducing the actors involved, the activity and the results.

Reporting phase (10 working days after the activity):

- 1) Findings from the consultations will be packaged in the form of a report and submitted by SOCIEUX+ and the Partner (AcR + Annex D1, D2).
- 2) Experts will fill an individual Expert Mission Report (ExMR) and an individual completed Expert Feedback Form (ExF) completed online, to be shared solely with SOCIEUX+.

## **4.2 Deliverables**

### **4.2.1 Pre-mission deliverables**

- P1: A methodological note, detailing the working approach, tools and methods to employ, a risks analysis, etc. The Methodological Note shall not exceed 3 pages (excluding cover page and annexes).
- P2: A activity/mission agenda, detailing the meetings and working sessions to be held, persons to meet, etc. The Activity/mission Agenda shall not exceed 2 pages.

### **4.2.2 Final deliverables**

- D1: A Communication strategy for the Information Support Centre for students with disabilities.
- D2: A Compendium of international and EU examples of national, local or institutional communication practices on the area of promoting studies and employability of people with disabilities.
- D3: An individual Expert Mission Report (ExMR) in SOCIEUX+ format (template provided). This report is a confidential product intended solely for and use by SOCIEUX+. The expert team may also submit a single-joint ExMR report if they prefer to do so (see instructions on the template).
- D4: An individual completed Expert Feedback Form (ExF) completed online (see instructions and link on the ExMR template).
- D5: A collective Activity Report (AcR) in SOCIEUX+ format (template provided). This AcR is to be produced jointly by the mission team. It is intended for the Partner Institution, and will be shared, most probably, with key stakeholders of the action. The report will reflect the tasks conducted in during the activity. It shall provide a meaningful contribution towards the final deliverables of the action.

## **5 REPORTING AND SUBMISSION OF DELIVERABLES**

### **5.1 Formats**

All deliverables and products of the activity (notes, reports, presentations, etc) shall comply with the formats and templates provided by the SOCIEUX+ Team.

All deliverables are to be submitted in electronic in electronic editable versions [Microsoft Word 97-2003 [doc], PowerPoint 97-2003 [ppt] and Excel 97-2003 [xls]; or in equivalent OpenDocument format). Non-editable electronic document such as in Portable Document Format (PDF) shall not be accepted.

Templates for electronic presentations during the activity/mission are provided by the SOCIEUX+ Team. These templates are in Microsoft PowerPoint format and comply with the SOCIEUX+ Corporate Image standards. These templates are to be used as a sole format by all members of the expert mission team. They are to be used for all presentations by the experts during and for the activity/mission. The use by the experts of their own, or their organisation(s), templates or formats are not allowed unless otherwise instructed in written [by email] to the experts by the SOCIEUX+ Team.

All versions of deliverables or other products used or produced during activity/mission by the experts shall include the following disclaimer:

*"Disclaimer:*

*The responsibility of this publication sole lies with its authors. The European Union, the European Commission, the implementation partners of SOCIEUX+ and the SOCIEUX+ Staff are not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein."*

Please refer to the expert information package for further guidance on communication and templates.

All deliverables are to be provided in English.

## **5.2 Submission and approval**

All deliverables versions (drafts, final or other) shall be submitted directly and only to SOCIEUX+ Team, unless otherwise instructed in written [by email] to the experts by the SOCIEUX+ Team.

### **5.2.1 Pre-mission deliverables**

- Pre-mission deliverables shall be submitted no later than 5 working days before the start of activity or departure of the mission of the experts, whichever is the earliest.
- Pre-mission deliverables will be shared and reviewed by the SOCIEUX+ and the Partner Institution. Feedback on the deliverables should be provided to the Principal Expert at latest 2 days before the start of activity or departure of the mission of the experts, whichever is the earliest. Comments and recommendation of this feedback shall be taken into account for the implementation of the activity/mission by the experts. Only the mission agenda shall be resubmitted with revision if requested by the SOCIEUX+ Team.

### **5.2.2 Final deliverables**

- The first draft versions of the final deliverables are to be submitted no later than 10 working days upon completion of the activity or return of the experts.
- Feedback to the first draft version of the report should be provided 10 working days after its submission.
- Inclusion of the feedback on drafts versions is expected 5 working days upon reception of the comments by the principal expert. (In general, no more than one round of feedback and revision is required, unless the quality of the deliverables is considered unsatisfactory by the SOCIEUX+ Team or/and the Partner Institution.)
- Final versions of the deliverables should be approved or rejected no later than 10 working days upon their submission to the SOCIEUX+ Team.
- Final payments and reimbursement of travel costs to experts can only be authorised upon approval of the final version of the deliverables by SOCIEUX+.

## **6 REQUIRED EXPERTISE**

## 6.1 Expertise profile

### **Principal expert (Expert #1):**

**Area(s) of expertise:** Workers with Disabilities, Education and training

**Specific skill(s) of expertise:** Communication, public relations

### **Requirements (essential/required):**

- *Education: university level (Masters or PhD relating to the subject are considered a plus)*
- *Strong professional experience in disability employment policies and/or social protection within an EU public administration;*
- *Relevant experience in contributing to communication strategies formulation and implementation in the area of disability/inclusive education or employment;*
- *Acute sense of diplomacy and institutional relations.*

### **Additional assets (advantageous in selection):**

- *Fluent in English, written and oral;*
- *Professional knowledge of Russian language;*
- *A previous experience in delivering short-term technical assistance in international cooperation.*

### **Expert #2**

**Area(s) of expertise:** Workers with Disabilities, Education and training

**Specific skill(s) of expertise:** 3.4.Change management & facilitation

### **Requirements (essential/required):**

- *Education: university level (Masters or PhD relating to the subject are considered a plus);*
- *Relevant experience in managing, accompanying, advising decision-makers on change and social policy reforms in the public sector (particularly disability/inclusive education or employment);*
- *Substantial knowledge and a previous experience of EU best practice and international standards of disability and employment for disabled persons;*
- *Relevant experience in working on disability issues with/within a higher education institution;*
- *Acute sense of diplomacy and institutional relations.*

### **Additional assets (advantageous in selection):**

- *Fluent in English, written and oral;*
- *Professional knowledge of Russian language;*
- *A previous experience in delivering short-term technical assistance in international cooperation.*

## 6.2 Estimated workload

	<b>Preparation</b>	<b>Mission work (distance)</b>	<b>Reporting &amp; deliverables</b>	<b>Total Working days</b>
Principal expert (#1)	4	10	5	19
Expert (#2)	4	10	5	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>38</b>

## 7 APPLICATIONS

## 7.1 Call for experts

All calls for experts for SOCIEUX+ activities are published online on the SOCIEUX+ website. Interested experts should submit their application on the SOCIEUX+ on-line expert database: <https://pmt.socieux.eu> (currently only available in English). The application process is:

1. If they have not already, experts create their SOCIEUX+ account by clicking on “Create an account” using an email address.
2. Login details for their account will be sent to experts by email, experts should create and submit their profile for review by<sup>8</sup>:
  - a. Providing contact details
  - b. Providing information on the competences, skills and working history of the expert. Experts are required to provide only limited information through fields marked with an asterisk. However, *experts are encouraged to complete in most detail de sections on skills and competences as the SOCIEUX+ Team also regularly reviews profiles in the roster to identify and contact potential experts for future missions.*
  - c. Uploading of a curriculum vitae, preferably in Europass format<sup>9</sup>.
3. Once their profile is approved by the SOCIEUX+ Team, they can apply to any available calls for experts accessible under the tab “Call for experts” and click on “Apply.”

If more information is needed, please contact SOCIEUX+ by email at [experts@socieux.eu](mailto:experts@socieux.eu) with the reference number of the application.

Collaborative or interested institutions wishing to make expertise available for a specific call for application may directly contact the team of SOCIEUX+ at [experts@socieux.eu](mailto:experts@socieux.eu).

## 7.2 Selection of experts

In principle, SOCIEUX+ mobilises experts from the public administrations and mandated bodies of EU member states, and practitioners working for social partners, including:

- Practitioners, civil servants and employees from publicly mandated bodies;
- Collaborators and employees of social partner institutions, such as trade unions and employer associations; and,
- Academic and research institutions.

Active public experts from collaborative institutions are given priority in the selection. Private consultants may also apply. Their application will be considered in case an appropriate public expert cannot be identified.

Only short-listed applicants may be contacted. The selection process may include interviews by phone or other communication means.

Interested candidates may download the **Guide for Experts and Collaborative Institutions** with detailed information on contracting with SOCIEUX+ at [www.socieux.eu](http://www.socieux.eu)

## 7.3 Contracting of public experts

Public experts can be in active duty or retired. Retired employees from international specialised agencies or cooperation agencies can also be mobilised, without regard to their former employer's collaborating with SOCIEUX+ on a specific action. Retired experts are considered as public experts for all purposes, benefits, and financial compensation provided by SOCIEUX+.

Short-listed candidates may be required to provide the contact of employer or proof of their ability to be directly contracted under their status as civil servant or public employee.

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<sup>8</sup>SOCIEUX+ expert database and other management tools comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) -Regulation (EU) 2016/679.

<sup>9</sup>Europass templates for CVs are available here: <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/curriculum-vitae/templates-instructions>

## **7.4 Financial compensations**

Contract officials or active-duty or retired employees are entitled to standard fixed allowances of 350 euros per working day worked. The fees of private consultants are negotiated according to their number of years of relevant expertise and the standard scale of SOCIEUX+.

Retired experts are assimilated to public employees for all intents and purposes, benefits and financial compensation provided by SOCIEUX+.

National regulations on remuneration and compensation of public employees and civil servants applies and may limit the payment of allowances by SOCIEUX+. The responsibility for compliance and verification lies with individual experts and their institutions of origin. The payment of income or other taxes is the sole responsibility of the mobilised experts and/or their organisations.

## **7.5 Travel costs**

All travel expenses for the mobilised experts (public, private or international institutions) are covered by SOCIEUX in accordance with the **Guide for Experts and Collaborative institutions** with detailed information on contracting with SOCIEUX+ (version as on date of signature of the contract).

## **8 COMMUNICATION & VISIBILITY**

SOCIEUX + can use its communication channels, such as the web, newsletter and other media, to share information about the implementation and results of the activities. For this, contributions of the experts mobilised are expected. The experts may be requested to provide such contributions in the field of communication as photographs, provide short texts, and interviews.

Short briefings, before and after the mission, with the Communication Officer of SOCIEUX+. This briefings will provide the opportunity to identify communication opportunities and strategies.

For specific activities, visibility products, such as brochures, USB sticks, notebooks and pens, can be made available to experts for on-site distribution.

## **9 CODE OF CONDUCT**

The experts mobilised by SOCIEUX+ will provide technical assistance from the preparatory stages of each activity to the delivery of products. The SOCIEUX+ Team will assist experts to fulfil their assignments by supporting and advising on the preparation of background materials before meetings. The SOCIEUX+ team will collect feedback from partner institutions and relevant stakeholders to ensure that mission reports and recommendations are delivered to national authorities, the EU Delegations in the partner countries and EuropeAid.

The experts mobilised are not representing SOCIEUX+ or the EU. Technical opinions and recommendations expressed are their own. They shall not express negative opinions on the implementation of actions supported by SOCIEUX+ to third-parties. Nevertheless, they shall be aware of SOCIEUX+'s objectives and functioning, and promote its services at the best of their knowledge, whenever possible and feasible.

The experts shall perform their duties in the Partner Country in a way that is fully compliant with and respectful of the local institutions, policies and cultural behaviours. They shall particularly adopt a culturally-sensitive behaviour in their way to deal with the local counterparts.

## **10 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

## **11 ANNEXES**

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## ABOUT SOCIEUX+

The European Union (EU) promotes and maintains dialogue on social protection and inclusive employment policies with an increasing number of partner countries. This effort has been confirmed by the European Commission (EC) Communication COM (2016) 740 final - "Proposal for a new European Consensus on Development, entitled *Our world, our dignity, our future*. A significant number of cooperation initiatives in these fields are funded by geographic or thematic instruments of the EU in different countries. Those initiatives are highly structured and address the medium- to long-term needs of partner countries. However, short-term measures and peer-to-peer cooperation to promote the development of social protection systems are needed to complement the EU's cooperation with third countries. SOCIEUX+ - EU Expert Facility on Employment, Labour and Social Protection responds to this need.

The SOCIEUX+ facility was setup by the EU through co-funding from France, Spain and Belgium and the resources managed by the European Commission's Directorate for Development and Cooperation (EuropeAid). The facility is implemented by a partnership composed of development cooperation agencies from Member States: Expertise France (the partnership lead), Fundación Internacional y para Iberoamérica de Administración y Políticas Públicas (FIIAPP) from Spain, Belgian International Cooperation on Social Protection (BELINCOSOC), and the Belgian Development Agency (Enabel).

The general objective of the Facility is to expand and improve access to better employment opportunities and inclusive social protection systems in partner countries. Its specific objective is to enhance the capacities of partner countries to better design, manage and monitor inclusive, effective, and sustainable employment strategies and social protection systems through short-term, peer-to-peer technical assistance and knowledge development.

SOCIEUX+ recognises the impact of social protection and employment in reducing poverty and vulnerability. It supports the efforts of partner governments in promoting inclusive and sustainable social protection and employment systems. SOCIEUX+ also complements the efforts made through other European Union initiatives.

The Facility is an expansion of SOCIEUX Social Protection EU Expertise in Development Cooperation, established in 2013.

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