



University Grants Commission
Sanothimi, Bhaktapur

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

(Date of publication: 31 December, 2025)

COUNTRY: NEPAL

NAME OF PROJECT: Nurturing Excellence in Higher Education Program (NEHEP)

Loan No./Credit No./Grant No.: IDA6884-NP

Assignment Title: Consulting Service for Fiduciary Review (Endline)

Reference No.: NEHEP/UGC/CS/CQS-02/082/83

The University Grants Commission (UGC) Nepal has received financing from the World Bank towards the cost of the Nurturing Excellence in Higher Education program (NEHEP) and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services. The consulting services ("the Services") include Fiduciary Review (Endline). The expected start date of assignment is February 2026. The detail TOR of the assignment can be found at the website: www.ugcnepal.edu.np or can be obtained at the address given below.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) now invites eligible consulting firms ("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 (criteria related to required qualifications and experience of the firm, but not individual experts' bio data). The shortlisting criteria are: *General experience of consulting firm (25), relevant experience (50) and technical and managerial capability of firm (25)*. Key experts will not be evaluated at shortlisting stage.

Consultant should submit company registration, VAT registration, Tax clearance (FY 2081-82 or time extension letter for tax return), power of attorney and JV agreement (if applicable) for eligibility.

Consultant may associate with other firms to enhance their qualifications but should indicate clearly whether the association is in the form of a joint venture and/or sub consultancy.

The attention of interested Firms is drawn to paragraphs 3.14, 3.16 and 3.17 of Section III of the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" Fifth edition September 2023 ("Procurement Regulations"), setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the Consultant's Qualifications based Selection (CQS) method set out in the procurement Regulations of the World Bank. Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours 10:00 to 16:00 hours.

Expression of Interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below in person or by email by 14 January, 2026, 16:00 hours Nepal Standard Time.

University Grants Commission

Attn: Prof. Dr. Gyan Bahadur Thapa, Secretary
Sanothimi, Bhaktapur, Nepal, Tel: 01-6638548, 6638549
E-mail: procurement@ugcnepal.edu.np

University Grants Commission

Sanothimi, Bhaktapur

Terms of Reference for Fiduciary Review (Consulting Firm)

Contract ID: NEHEP/UGC/CS/CQS-02/082/83

1. Background

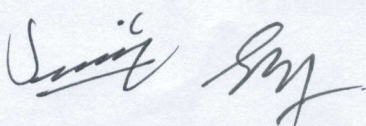
University Grants Commission (UGC), Nepal, is a national agency that provides financial, policy and regulatory supports to higher education institutions in Nepal. The main objectives of UGC are to coordinate among universities; allocate and disburse government grants to universities and higher educational institutions and take appropriate steps for the promotion and maintenance of standards of higher education in Nepal. UGC allocates and distributes grants to the universities and their campuses. UGC with funding from the World Bank is implementing Nurturing Excellence in Higher Education Program (NEHEP), an integral part of the National Higher Educational Program (NHEP) initiatives as a Program for Results (PforR). The NEHEP supports specific reform initiatives of the NHEP, which are elaborated in the Financing Agreement between the Government of Nepal (GON) and World Bank, Program Appraisal Document and the Operations Manual and other relevant documents.

UGC uses the government's public financial management (PFM) system for management of all funding of the program activities. The use of government PFM systems for development partner disbursement to the Central Treasury Account requires that fiduciary risk can be managed within levels acceptable to the government and development partners. In this respect, three fiduciary reviews, which includes both public financial management and procurement, are intended to be carried out as base-line, mid-line and end-line. The objectives of the reviews are to inform the status and adopt needful actions for subsequent improvement of the overall fiduciary management of the higher education system including UGC and the program partner institutions.

This will be an endline review that will be carried out under the Investment Project Financing (IPF) part (Component 2) of the NEHEP. UGC intends to engage a consulting firm in accordance with the World Bank's Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers, 5th edition, September 2023. The selected firm will provide specialized consulting services in fiduciary review of UGC and its beneficiaries' institutions as per the TOR.

2. Purpose of the Assignment

The main purpose of this assignment is to conduct a fiduciary review of UGC and its beneficiary HEIs in compliance with Nepal Financial Reporting Standards (NFRS) and the Nepal Public Sector Accounting Standards (NPSAS). The review will assess the status of fiduciary management arrangements, identify any gaps and risks, and recommend action plan to mitigate identified risks and areas of improvement. It will address financial management, procurement,



and anti-corruption measures, providing a Financial Management Improvement Plan (FMIP) for both short-term and long-term interventions.



3. Scope of Work

The fiduciary review will focus on the following areas:

i. Financial Management Review:

- Review the budgeting and planning process, accounting system, internal control system, internal audit and personnel data management.
- Assess compliance with Nepal's financial reporting standards.
- Evaluate financial reporting processes at UGC and the HEIs, including internal and external audits and the preparation of financial statements.
- Assess the compilation and consolidation process of financial reporting by the UGC received through HEIs and identify areas for improvement

ii. Grants and Fund Utilization:

- Review the process for allocation of resources against the plan, the release of grants to universities and HEIs and assess financial management at those institutions.
- Ensure compliance with grant usage conditions and verify that funds are used as intended.
- Ensure that the funds released to the universities and HEIs were properly utilized for the intended purpose, which should be confirmed through sampling and site visits.
- Review the report back mechanism of unutilised funds and timely refund of unspent fund.

iii. Procurement Systems:

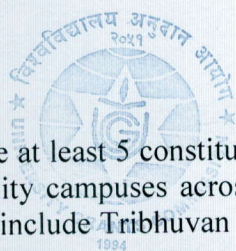
- Review procurement practices at UGC and its beneficiaries in accordance with World Bank guidelines and the Public Procurement Act of Nepal.
- Ensure that procurement processes are transparent, competitive, and in compliance with relevant regulations.

iv. Risk Management and Internal Controls:

- Assess the adequacy of risk management and internal control systems at UGC and its beneficiaries to prevent fraud and corruption.
- Review the internal audit practices of UGC and the HEIs, suggesting improvements where necessary.
- Assess the governance mechanism within the UGC, selected HEIs and its implication in the financial management.
- Take account of any reported cases of fraud, corruption or public charges within UGC and the selected HEIs.

v. Compliance and Reporting:

- Analyse reports from the Auditor General and the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA), focusing on recurring issues related to UGC and HEIs.
- Take account of any reported cases of fraud, corruption or public charges within UGC and the selected HEIs.
- Evaluate the implementation status of NPSAS and identify areas for improvement.



vi. Sampling for Review:

- The consultancy firm will sample at least 5 constituent campuses (3 from TU and 2 from Others) and 10 community campuses across various geographic regions for review. The review will also include Tribhuvan University's central office and UGC.

4. Activities of the Assignment

- Assessment of Fiduciary Arrangements:** Evaluate the financial, accounting, and procurement practices of UGC and HEIs to ensure compliance with applicable standards (NFRS, NPSAS) and identify areas for improvement.
- Risk Analysis:** Analyze systemic risks in the financial management system and suggest templates and strategies for risk mitigation.
- Internal Audit Review:** Assess the current internal audit system and propose improvements for a more robust audit framework at both UGC and HEIs.
- Improvement Planning:** Work with UGC's Financial Policy Improvement specialist to develop a detailed Financial Management Improvement Plan (FMIP), and internal control guidelines including a corrective action plan and timelines for implementation.

5. Qualifications of Consultants

i) Consulting Firm:

- The consulting firm must have a proven track record of at least four financial assessments in donor-funded projects, with at least two fiduciary reviews in projects of similar scope and complexity.
- Experience in conducting reviews in compliance with IFRS and NPSAS is essential.

ii) Key Team Members:

○ **Team Leader (1 person, 2.5 months):**

- Master's degree in financial management or a certified accountant.
- Membership in a recognized accountancy body.
- At least 10 years of experience in financial management, procurement, and internal controls, especially in donor-funded programs i.e. World Bank, ADB etc
- Experience with NFRS, NPSAS, and the Government of Nepal's financial management system.
- Leadership, communication, and report-writing skills.

○ **Financial Audit Specialist (1 person, 2.5 months):**

- Certified accountant with at least 5 years of experience in government-executed donor-funded programs i.e. World Bank, ADB etc
- Membership in a recognized accountancy body.
- In-depth knowledge of NFRS, NPSAS, Committee of Sponsoring Organizations (COSO) framework and auditing standards.

○ **Procurement Audit Specialist (1 person, 10 days):**

- At least a master's degree and minimum of 5 years of relevant experience in procurement systems, especially in the public sector in Nepal. Experience with donor-funded programs i.e. World Bank, ADB etc. would be a value addition.

Signature



- Familiarity with Nepal's Public Procurement Act and World Bank procurement guidelines.

6. Deliverables

The FR will commence the assignment latest by February, 2026, with an estimated total duration of the assignment of maximum 10 weeks. The work is to be concluded by May, 2026, with the submission of a report presenting outcomes from the above tasks including a summary of finding, particularly, gaps, recommendations, actions for follow-up with concrete timeframe to be completed.

Following deliverables are expected from the date of contract signing:

- **Inception Report** (due within 2 weeks): Detailed work plan and methodology.
- **Draft Fiduciary Review Report** (due within 8 weeks): Includes key findings, gaps, and recommendations.
- **Final Fiduciary Review Report** (due within 10 weeks): Incorporates feedback from UGC and outlines a detailed FMIP.

7. Selection Method

The consultant will be selected based on the selection of CQS of the World Bank's 'Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers,' 5th edition, September 2023. Selection criteria will include the consultant/firm's relevant experience, qualifications, and work in fiduciary assessments.

8. Facilities Provided by UGC

UGC will provide office space, internet access, and coordinate with government offices, universities, and HEIs. Necessary arrangements for data collection and visits to selected institutions will also be facilitated.

9. Duration and Commencement of Contract

The contract is expected to last for 10 weeks and commence on February, 2026.