



## Higher Education Commission

**Request For Proposals: HEC 03/2022: Review of the Fiji National Qualifications Framework (FQF)**

Terms of Reference (ToR)

Release Date: 16/12/2022

**Closing Time & Date: 4 pm (GMT+12), 26/12/ 2022**

**CONFIDENTIAL**



# Fiji Higher Education Commission

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## 1 About the Higher Education Commission

The Higher Education Commission (Commission) was established in 2010 under Section 5 of the Higher Education Act 2008 (the Act) as a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal with 11 functions as stipulated in Section 7.

The Act's purpose, as per its preamble, is to regulate the establishment, recognition, operation, and standards of higher education institutions (HEIs) and related matters.

The Regulations provide additional specifications related to applications for recognition, registration, and Review of HEIs. The Commission also reviews HEIs registered with the Commission for quality assurance under the Higher Education Regulations 2009. Moreover, the Higher Education (Qualifications) Regulations 2010<sup>1</sup> (Regulations 2010) established the Fiji Qualifications Council (FQC).

The FQC is the custodian of the Fiji National Qualifications Framework (FQF)<sup>2</sup> and is mandated to develop, implement, and maintain the criteria and processes for the accreditation<sup>3</sup> and registration of qualifications<sup>4</sup> on the FQF.

As a custodian, FQC aims to ensure that qualifications are compatible with the knowledge and skills necessary for sustainable economic and social development in Fiji.

The FQC is responsible for functions pursuant to regulation 6 of the Regulations 2010.

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<sup>1</sup> Application: Regulations shall apply to all higher education institutions, overseas institutions, the Higher Education Commission and its secretariat, and any person intending to establish a new institution (reg.2 of the Regulations 2010).

<sup>2</sup> "Fiji National Qualifications Framework" means the framework approved by the Commission for the registration of national standards and qualifications (reg.3 of the Regulations 2010).

<sup>3</sup> The accreditation (an institution that is not constituted under its own Act must apply to the Commission for accreditation of its qualifications (reg.15 of Regulations 2010) and recording of qualifications is a quality assurance process to ensure that the accredited qualification meets the requirements of the FQF and can be recorded on the National Register for Fiji Higher Education.

<sup>4</sup> "Qualification" means the formal recognition of the achievement of the required number and range of credits and such other requirements at specific levels of the Fiji National Qualifications Framework as may be determined by the relevant bodies registered for such purpose by the Fiji Qualifications Council (reg.3 of the HE Regulations 2010).



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## 2 Background

The FQF provides a system for describing and classifying quality-assured qualifications. It provides for different learning pathways and promotes learner mobility by clarifying how qualifications relate to each other within the national system.

The FQF is a critical national planning tool, providing the strategic platform for education and training tailored toward delivering a supply of people with the skills, knowledge and attitudes that match current and future needs across all aspects of the Fijian economy.

The FQF was developed in consultation with all stakeholders, including industry and international advisors. It clarifies how competencies and qualifications relate to each other at different levels and establishes learning pathways that will enhance learner mobility and stimulate progression and career development.

The FQF was first published in 2012 and reviewed in 2017. A second review of the FQF was recommended to be conducted after five years.

## 3 Purpose

This project aims to review the current FQF to determine its relevance to local and international stakeholders and ensure that it meets the needs of students, employers, and higher education providers and aligns with the Tokyo convention and the global convention.

The Commission seeks a Request for Proposal (RFP) to review and strengthen the FQF.

## 4 Objectives of the review

The review is intended to capture the views of all stakeholders (local, regional, and international) to determine if the FQF remains "*fit for purpose*", considering the global changes in the education and economic landscapes and development in TVET, higher education and qualifications frameworks regionally and internationally.

The broad outcomes of the review and strengthening of the Fiji National Qualifications Framework are to:

- (i) review the current Fiji National Qualifications Framework (structure and components) and its effectiveness for capability and capacity development and its implementation and operational support systems. This would include, but not limited to:



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- (a) An analysis of the relationships between levels and qualifications to ensure that they are clear, appropriate, and explicit;
- (b) Evaluate levels and level descriptors expressed in simple language, consistent interpretation and application;
- (c) An assessment of the placement of qualifications in the framework and consider any general areas of convergence and optimal points of differentiation of technical, vocational, education, and training and higher education qualifications.
- (ii) Provide recommendations for the strengthening of the Fiji National Qualifications Framework:
  - (a) Ensuring that the FQF is futuristic, flexible, responsive, clear, and transparent and guides the development of high-quality higher education in Fiji (including micro-qualifications);
  - (b) Reflecting the knowledge, skills and capabilities required by individuals to meet the current and anticipated human capital needs of the Fijian economy for sustainable and inclusive development;
  - (c) Effectively facilitates access to learning pathways, student mobility and international recognition of qualifications and promotes gender mainstreaming strategies;
  - (d) It reflects international good practices, including reference to the Pacific Qualifications Framework.
  - (e) Provide recommendations on changes to any Commission's policies, procedures, directives, and practices;
  - (f) Make recommendations on ensuring ongoing currency and relevancy of the FQF through monitoring and review.

## 5 Scope

Activities and deliverables will include:

Phase	Activity	Deliverable
Phase One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Together with UNESCO, develop a research framework to assess the currency and relevancy of the FQF and its related policies, which will include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Executive summary;</li> <li>▪ Introduction;</li> <li>▪ FQF architecture;</li> <li>▪ Qualification standards and pathways;</li> <li>▪ Supporting policies; and</li> <li>▪ Assessment methods and stakeholder engagement plans.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Deliverable One:</b> The research framework paper



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<b>Phase Two</b>	Conduct internal and external consultations listed below to review the current FQF.	<b>Milestone Two:</b> Summary report from internal and external consultation discussions.
<b>Phase Three</b>	Prepare a high-level report including recommendations presented, discussed, and agreed upon with the Commission and Commission's Secretariat, the FQC and UNESCO.	<b>Deliverable Three:</b> High-level report and recommendations.
<b>Phase Four:</b>	Facilitate workshop(s) with external stakeholders to present and discuss the final report, including a summary of feedback from the workshop(s) to be prepared, raised, and discussed with the Commission, Commission's Secretariat and the FQC.	<b>Deliverable Four:</b> The approved final report.

Stakeholders in Fiji may include but are not limited to:

- Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts and other Government ministries/agencies;
- TVET and Higher Education Institutions;
- Learners;
- Industries/Employers/TVET Sector Review Committee/FCEF Councils;
- Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)/The Pacific Community-EQAP;
- Faith-based organisations;
- Community members; and
- Other quality assurance agencies in the wider Asia-Pacific region.

## 6. Qualifications, Knowledge and Skills, and Experience:

### 6.1 Qualification

A minimum of a Master's degree in Education, Social Sciences or other relevant field is required.

### 6.2 Experience

- At least ten (10) years of relevant professional experience in higher education, technical and vocational educational and training, preferably in policy, quality assurance and management levels.



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- At least five (5) years of experience in reviewing, developing, implementing and monitoring qualification frameworks at the regional and international level, especially in developing countries.
- At least completed two assignments successfully of similar nature and complexity.
- Some experience in the higher education sector in Fiji.

## 6.3 Skills

- Have a strong client orientation, proven ability to work with groups and individuals from varied backgrounds, and skills in promoting stakeholder participation in projects.
- Demonstrated capacity for strategic thinking with excellent organisation and coordination skills.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills and the ability to prepare high-quality reports in English.

*The Consultant must be equipped with all relevant tools and resources required to complete the consultancy. The commencement of this project is expected to start on 17 January 2023 and be completed by 21 March 2023.*

## 7. RFP Coordinator

The overall Lead would be the Director of the Commission for endorsement of documents and payments, and the RFP coordinator listed below will be the liaison officer between the Consultant and the Commission:

**Ms. Ani Lacanivalu**

**Email: [ani.lacanivalu@fhec.org.fj](mailto:ani.lacanivalu@fhec.org.fj)**

**However, in the absence of the Coordinator, clarification may be sought with the Executive Officer at [reshika.kumar@fhec.org.fj](mailto:reshika.kumar@fhec.org.fj) or telephone number 3100031. Please use the RFP Reference Number and RFP Title in all communications with the RFP Coordinator.** Unauthorised communication regarding the RFP with Commission employees or representatives may result in disqualification. Any oral communications will be considered unofficial and non-binding on the Commission's part. Bidders should rely only on written statements issued by the RFP Coordinator.



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## 8. Proposal Requirements

- Name, address, email, and mobile number of the person(s) responsible for submitting the proposal.
- A cover letter, curriculum vitae with two (3) professional referees, relevant similar projects completed, and publications.
- Detailed and curated proposal (of no more than ten pages) outlining the proposed methodology, deliverables, and timelines with a professional fee schedule per deliverable. Interested individuals are encouraged **not to include** references, testimonials, and company and personnel profiles with their proposals. However, these should be made readily available to the Commission upon request.
- A detailed cost breakdown in Fijian Dollars (FJD) using Annexe 1: Cost Breakdown form. The detailed cost breakdown must be the full costing (including direct & indirect costs) to finish the proposed project.
- When expressing interest as an entity, the bidders must highlight their most recent projects and geographical experiences relevant to this TOR and its management capacity. If consultants are submitting an RFP as a joint venture, the RFP will be submitted by the lead firm or lead partner and should identify each joint venture partner.

## 9. Instructions

All proposals must meet the requirements as outlined in the ToR and are to be submitted electronically via email to [proposals@fhec.org.fj](mailto:proposals@fhec.org.fj) **no later than 4:00 pm Fiji Time (GMT +12), 26 December 2022**, and must be subjected as "**Proposal: HEC03/2022: Review of the Fiji National Qualifications Framework**".

Applications should be addressed to the following:

**The Director  
Higher Education Commission  
P.O. Box 2583  
Government Buildings  
Suva  
Fiji**

**All proposals and accompanying documentation will become the property of the Commission and will not be returned.**



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## 10. Project Timeline

The work should take place within 64 consecutive days.

Consultancy fees will be paid in FJD\$ upon the successful completion of deliverables. Fees are subject to Fiji tax laws.

### Proposed Timelines (Tentative)

The Commission intends to complete the selection process using the following schedule. However, the Commission reserves the right to adjust or reschedule milestones as necessary:

Action	Date
Release RFP	21/12/2022
Vendor Bid Responses Due	26/12/2022
Finalists Notified	04/01/2023
Tender Committee Approval/Contracts Awarded	06/01/2023

## 11. Terms and Conditions

The following terms and conditions apply to this RFP and do not include all terms and conditions in the final Contract.

**Pre-Submittal Questions** – Questions regarding the RFP, please email to Ms Ani Lacanivalu ([ani.lacanivalu@fhec.org.fj](mailto:ani.lacanivalu@fhec.org.fj)) or the Director of the Commission. Unauthorised communication regarding the RFP with Commission's employees or representatives may result in disqualification. Any oral communications will be considered unofficial and non-binding on the Commission's part. Applicants should rely only on written statements issued by the RFP Coordinator.

**Rejection or Acceptance of Proposals** – the Commission reserves the right to reject any or all applications, waive any minor informalities or irregularities contained in any application, and accept any applicant deemed to be in the best interest of the Commission and the nation.

**Non-Obligation** – Receipt of proposals in response to this RFP, and the ToR does not obligate the Commission in any way. The Commission's right to accept or reject any bid shall be exercised solely (Selection Panel). The Commission shall retain the right to abandon the RFP process at any time before the actual execution of a contract with a Consultant. The Commission shall bear no financial or other responsibility in such abandonment.



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**Copyright and Confidentiality** – The selected Consultant shall maintain strict privacy of all Commission's records, data, and files. All physical and intellectual property, title rights, copyrights, and all other rights whatsoever in any materials produced or partly produced, published, or unpublished to provide and complete the Services shall be the sole property of the Commission (for the avoidance of doubt, this includes, without limitation, all reports, papers, electronic documents (including computer software, and recordings).

The selected Consultant agrees that he/she/they will not at any time disclose to any person other than is necessary for the RFP and ToR or, as required by law, any information it acquired or the substance of its recommendations or advice to provide and complete the Services.

**Governing Law and Jurisdiction:** Any contracts signed shall be read and constructed in all respect in accordance with the law in force in the Republic of Fiji.

**Payments** – The Consultant(s) shall provide invoices for the fees upon successfully. For clarity, the Commission will pay invoices submitted by the selected Consultant(s) as progress is made on project implementation and agreed-upon service stipulated in the final Contract. Before payment, invoices will be reviewed to determine if billing reflects actual agreed-upon deliverables/ project progression and performance. Upon acceptance of the billing by the Commission's Director, payment will be processed and submitted to the Commission where necessary.

**RFP Amendments** – the Commission reserves the right to request clarification on any applicants or ask respondents to supply any additional necessary material to evaluate the proposal. The Commission also reserves the right to change the RFP schedule or issue amendments to the ToR ad RFP at any time without prior notification.

**Disclaimer** – This ToR is not a comprehensive list of evaluation criteria, the development schedule, the proposed process, and requirements for the review of the FQF (the deliverables and all the Commission's requirements but includes the essential requirements that will be used to evaluate the proposals).

The Commission reserves the right at the contract award to vary the quantity of services/requirements specified in the ToR.

The Commission reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal, annul the selection process, and disclaim any bids at any time without incurring any liability to the affected party/parties.

-- ENDS --