

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (CONSULTING SERVICES – INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS)

ROMANIA

Romania Secondary Education Project

Loan Agreement No 8481-RO

Assignment Title: Data collection to support revision of the Grade 8 and Baccalaureate exam items

Reference No.: C 1.2.3.1

The *Government of Romania (GoR)* has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the *Romania Secondary Education Project*, and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services.

The consulting services (“the Services”) include *Data collection to support revision of the Grade 8 and Baccalaureate exam items* within a period of *60 days, between November 2019 and January 2020*. The Terms of Reference for *Data collection to support revision of the Grade 8 and Baccalaureate exam items* are annexed to this Request for Expressions of Interest.

The *Ministry of National Education / Unit for the Management of Externally Financed Projects* now invites eligible consultants (“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.

One Consultant will be selected in accordance with the selection of individual consultants method set out in the Consultant Guidelines. Firms are not allowed to propose individual consultants. Each consultant must indicate the targeted position, taking into account the following minimum qualification requirements:

Qualification

The minimum competencies required are the following:

- (i) Bachelor’s degree in education sciences/ sociology/ informatics/ mathematics/ engineering
- (ii) Experience with data entry and operation, documents processing and analysis
- (iii) Collaborative work skills

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to paragraph 1.9 of the World Bank's "Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits and Grants by World Bank Borrowers" dated January 2011 (revised July 2014). ("Consultant Guidelines"), setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest. In addition, please refer to the following specific information on conflict of interest related to this assignment:

Bank policy requires that consultants provide professional, objective, and impartial advice and at all times hold the client's interests paramount, without any consideration for future work, and that in providing advice they avoid conflicts with other assignments and their own corporate interests. Consultants shall not be hired for any assignment that would be in conflict with their prior or current obligations to other clients, or that may place them in a position of being unable to carry out the assignment in the best interest of the Borrower. Without limitation on the generality of the foregoing, consultants shall not be hired under the circumstances set forth below:

(a) Conflict between consulting activities and procurement of goods, works, or non-consulting services (i.e., services other than consulting services covered by these Guidelines): A firm that has been engaged by the Borrower to provide goods, works, or non-consulting services for a project, or any affiliate that directly or indirectly controls, is controlled by, or is under common control with that firm, shall be disqualified from providing consulting services resulting from or directly related to those goods, works, or non-consulting services. Conversely, a firm hired to provide consulting services for the preparation (before Loan effectiveness) or implementation of a project, or any affiliate that directly or indirectly controls, is controlled by, or is under common control with that firm, shall be disqualified from subsequently providing goods, works, or services (other than consulting services covered by these Guidelines) resulting from or directly related to the consulting services for such preparation or implementation. This provision does not apply to the various firms (consultants, contractors, or suppliers) which together are performing the Contractor's obligations under a turnkey or design and build contract.

(b) Conflict among consulting assignments: Neither consultants (including their personnel and sub-consultants), nor any affiliate that directly or indirectly controls, is controlled by, or is under common control with that firm, shall be hired for any assignment that, by its nature, may be in conflict with another assignment of the consultants. As an example, consultants assisting a client in the privatization of public assets shall neither purchase, nor advise purchasers of, such assets. Similarly, consultants hired to prepare Terms of Reference (TOR) for an assignment shall not be hired for the assignment in question.

(c) Relationship with Borrower's staff: Consultants (including their experts and other personnel, and sub-consultants) that have a close business or family relationship with a professional staff of the Borrower (or of the project implementing agency, or of a recipient of a part of the loan) who are directly or indirectly involved in any part of: (i) the preparation of the TOR for the assignment, (ii) the selection process for the contract, or (iii) the supervision of such contract may not be awarded a contract, unless the conflict stemming from this relationship has been resolved in a manner acceptable to the Bank throughout the selection process and the execution of the contract.

(d) A consultant shall submit only one proposal, either individually or as a joint venture partner in another proposal. If a consultant, including a joint venture partner, submits or participates in more than one proposal, all such proposals shall be disqualified. This does not, however, preclude a consulting firm to participate as a sub-consultant, or an individual to

participate as a team member, in more than one proposal when circumstances justify and if permitted by the RFP (Request for Proposal).

One Consultant will be selected in accordance with the selection of individual consultants method set out in the Consultant Guidelines.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours 8:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

Expressions of interest and CVs must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail, or by fax, or by e-mail) by October 29, 2019, at 4 P.M local time. To validate the information presented in the CV, the candidate will attach all supporting documents, necessary to prove at least the minimum qualifications that are mandatory (study diplomas, proofs for the professional experience, list of papers and/or copies after the cover and the content of relevant scientific works, recommendations, training diplomas etc.).

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Romania
Ministry of National Education
Romania Secondary Education Project (ROSE Project)
Loan Agreement N° 8481-RO

**Terms of Reference for Individual Consultant – Data collection to support revision
of the Grade 8 and Bacculaureate exam items**

I. Background

On April 17, 2015, the Government of Romania (GoR) and the World Bank (WB) signed the Loan Agreement N° 8481-RO on the implementation of the **Romania Secondary Education Project** (hereinafter referred to as **the ROSE Project**). The ROSE Project was declared effective on October 14, 2015, and will be implemented by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) until November 2022, through the Unit for the Management of Externally Financed Projects (UMEFP). The ROSE Project Development Objectives (PDO) are to improve transition from upper secondary to tertiary education and increase the retention in the first year of tertiary education in project-supported education institutions. It is structured in three components, as described below.

Component 1 – School-based and Systemic Interventions. This component finances supply-side interventions at the school and system levels to address the academic and personal factors hindering Romanian students from transitioning from upper secondary to tertiary education, including dropping out, declining to take the Bacculaureate, or scoring a low mark on the Bacculaureate.

Sub-component 1.1 – School-based Interventions. This sub-component supports the transition of students from upper secondary to tertiary education using a decentralized approach based on non-competitive grants to low-performing public high schools.

At the end of the Project, it is estimated that approximately 80 percent of Romanian public high schools would benefit from this sub-component.

Sub-component 1.2 – Systemic Interventions. This sub-component will support a series of interventions aimed at addressing the systemic challenges faced by all high schools in facilitating the transition into tertiary education and finances activities implemented centrally by MoNE such as: revision of the upper secondary education curriculum; revision of national exams items; training of teachers and public-school directors etc. This sub-component finances technical assistance for the National Centre for Assessment and Examination (NCAE) to design, implement and evaluate the activities of the ROSE Project in the field of assessment and national evaluations:

- Revision and update Grade 8 and bacculaureate exam banks of items;
- Training for NCAE and relevant MoNE staff, including the strengthening of the institutional capacity of the NCAE;

- Development and implementation of a Grade 10 learning assessment to be administered at the end of compulsory education.

This sub-component will finance the design and implementation of a methodology to improve the design and quality of items for the national assessments and exams at the end of 8th and 12th grade, ensuring the validity, reliability and objectivity of the assessment. Following this methodology, the high-stake 8th grade exam and 12th grade baccalaureate exam will be completely revised by 2024, based on a systematic, expert-run process of design, development and implementation.

The process will start with an analysis of the current items used in the 8th grade National Evaluation 2019 to conclude on the quality of items and to substantiate the development process of the new items. To allow item level analysis, the project will finance consultancy services for the collection of the item score points on a sample of tests from the 2019 8th grade National Evaluation.

Component 2 – University - Level Interventions and Bridge Programs. This component supports activities designed to address the needs of students who are at risk of dropping out of faculties in the first year of study in tertiary education. It finances three grant schemes – one non-competitive and two competitive – for public faculties/universities that serve these at-risk students. Approximately 85 percent of Romanian public faculties would benefit from this component.

Component 3 – Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation. This component finances day-to-day project management activities, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) activities, project audits, as well as incremental operational and staffing costs of the MoNE's UMEFP.

II. Objective

The objective of this assignment is to collect the item score points on a sample of tests administered at the 8th grade 2019 National Evaluation (Romanian and Mathematics tests).

This assignment is part of the implementation of the Revised Work Plan of the National Centre for Assessment and Examination (NCAE) and will allow the item-level analysis. This analysis will be performed by another consultant and will contribute to evidence-based future decisions regarding structural changes needed in the development of the revised exam items.

III. Scope of Services

The scope of this assignment is to collect individual score points for items that were administered to a sample of eight-graders at the Romanian Language and Mathematics exams using National Evaluation 2019 data.

To achieve the objective of this assignment, the Consultant is expected to undertake the following tasks:

- a. **Meet the core members of the ROSE Project Management Unit**, especially the Project Director and the Systemic Interventions Coordinator.
- b. **Meet and collaborate with the representatives of the National Center for Assessment and Examinations**, respectively the staff responsible for the Work Plan, as indicated by NCAE management team.
- c. **Introduce item-level data** (score points) into the data collection file, from around 600 individual tests of Romanian Language and 600 individual tests of Mathematics of the 2019 National Evaluation (8th grade).
- d. **Check the entered data** according to the feedback of the international consultant on assessment and evaluation and complete the data cleaning report.
- e. **Submit the final data file** including all the modifications required by UMEFP to the UMEFP director.

The assignment will be supervised by the Systemic Interventions Coordinator. All comments provided should be incorporated in the final version of the documents.

IV. Deliverables

As a result of the services described above, the Consultant shall deliver the products specified in the table below. All deliverables shall be provided in English.

Deliverable	Due Date (in weeks following contract signing)
Worksheets with collected individual score points for items that were administered to a sample of the eight-graders at the Romanian Language and Mathematics exams using National Examination 2019 data.	4 weeks
Data cleaning report in response to the feedback received from the international consultant	2 weeks

V. Qualifications

The following qualifications are required for the proposed appointment:

- Bachelor's degree in education sciences/ sociology/ informatics/ mathematics/ engineering
- Experience with data entry and operation, documents processing and analysis
- Collaborative work skills

VI. Other Relevant Terms

Period of the Assignment. The assignment is planned for up to 60 days between November 2019 and January 2020, with the possibility to be extended, if needed, based on positive assessment of the performance.

Confidentiality. The Consultant shall not at any time communicate to any person or entity any confidential information acquired in the course of the proposed assignment.

Proprietary Rights. All documentation compiled or prepared by the Consultant for the MoNE and World Bank in the course of the proposed assignment shall be confidential. The MoNE shall, solely and exclusively, own all rights to any work created in connection with this agreement, including all data, documents, information, copyrights, patents, trademarks, trade secrets or other proprietary rights. The Consultant is not allowed to post or publish (electronically or in print) any project-related information without the explicit permission of the MoNE.