

02.09.2020, Bucharest

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

ROMANIA

Romania Secondary Education Project

Loan Agreement No 8481-RO

Assignment Title: Maintenance of the Project Management Information System

Reference No.: C 3/9.5

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 **Maintenance of the Project Management Information System** between September 2020 and December 2022. The Terms of Reference for **Maintenance of the Project Management Information System** are annexed to this Request for Expressions of Interest.

The *Ministry of Education and Research / 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.**

Qualification for the Maintenance of the Project Management Information System

The minimum competencies required from the Consultant are the following:

- Bachelor/Master degree or equivalent in Computer Science or related field;
- experience with development, implementation or administration/ maintenance of complex IT systems;
- experience with JAVA development.
- knowledge of database development, testing, integration and administration methodologies;
- Ability to deliver under tight deadlines and produce high quality outputs;
- Experience in documenting and managing issues and actions for administration / maintenance of information systems;
- Demonstrate strong interpersonal skills and good written and oral communication 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).

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 **September 11, 2020, at 2 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.).

Ministry of Education and Research – Unit for the Management of Externally Financed Projects

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Romania
Ministry of Education and Research
Romania Secondary Education Project
Loan Agreement N° 8481-RO

Terms of Reference for Maintenance of the software/management information system

1. 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 Education and Research of Romania (MER), through the Unit for the Management of Externally Financed Projects (UMEFP), until November 2022. The ROSE Project Development Objectives (PDO) are to improve the 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 Baccalaureate, or scoring a low mark at the Baccalaureate exam.

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. The criteria for selection of eligible high schools combine the following rates: Baccalaureate passing rate and dropout rate. Grants will be awarded to public high schools for a 3 or 4-year period, to allow sufficient time for implementing activities aimed at supporting students from Grade 9 through Grade 12. At the end of the Project, approximately 900 public high schools would benefit from this sub-component.

Sub-component 1.2 – Systemic Interventions. This sub-component would address the systemic challenges faced by all high schools in facilitating the transition into tertiary education, through activities to be centrally implemented by the MER. It finances activities related to curriculum, assessment, training of teachers and public school directors, improving teaching conditions within Teachers Houses, financing participation of Romanian students in large scale international assessments etc.

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 four grant schemes for public universities that serve these at-risk students. Approximately 390 grants will be approved for public faculties or universities.

Component 3 – Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation. This component finances day-to-day project management activities, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) activities and

studies, project audits, as well as incremental operational and staffing costs of the MER's Unit for the Management of Externally Financed Projects.

The MER is the main implementing agency responsible for the ROSE Project. Public high schools and public tertiary education institutions identified as beneficiaries of the grant components implement their corresponding parts of the Project under a decentralized approach, but with technical assistance of specialists financed under the Project. School Inspectorates play a role in the transfer of funds to public high schools under the implementation of the Sub-component 1.1.

A project management and information system for evaluation, monitoring, reporting and financial management of the ROSE Project, hereinafter called RMIS, had been developed according to terms of reference approved by the World Bank.

Given the large multi-tranche grant schemes for a high number of geographically-dispersed recipients, the RMIS is implemented for monitoring, reporting, and financial management (FM), including for these components which account for more than 80 percent of the loan. RMIS is able to maintain multi-currency records, per each project component, category, activity, contract and grant, and generate automatic reports to be used for project monitoring, financial reporting and disbursement of the loan proceeds. Appropriate project analytical records and supporting documentation are maintained at grantees level as well.

The RMIS is used to store financial and technical data and to prepare monthly reports to the Ministry of Public Finance, periodical reports to the World Bank (according to the templates of interim unaudited financial reports), financial statements for the auditors, and other relevant project reports such as the Project Implementation Plan and Project Procurement Plan. RMIS's allows also to store all needed data for management of all activities defined in the Project Implementation Plan in terms of: financial management (resources allocated, committed, and spent); procurement (procurement method, estimated and actual dates of all relevant phases of the procurement process); implementation schedule (estimated and actual implementation periods); and monitoring (measurement of related intermediate and outcome indicators).

The RMIS allows introduction of data from different entities, approximately 1.500, over an Internet connection. It also allows for keeping detailed project accounting records, including distinct records for each grant project that UMEFP manages.

The UMEFP is responsible for keeping detailed accounting records for the ROSE Project. Specific functionalities are in place for the timely archiving of the monthly files and regular information backup.

The RMIS was developed using JAVA code.

2. Objective

The objective of this assignment is to provide support & maintenance for the existing ROSE Management Information System (RMIS) until December 31, 2022, closing date of the ROSE Project.

3. Scope of Services

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

- *Repetitive Activities (per month):*
 - Ensure the correct and continuous functioning of the RMIS application, as well as bug fixing, when needed
 - Perform databases maintenance, optimization and correction
 - Perform Java code maintenance, optimization and correction
 - Update and improve the RMIS documentation: administration guidelines, user guidelines, tutorials
 - Update the operating system and installed applications
 - Update Oracle MySQL Database Server
 - Monitor actively all RMIS related hardware equipment (at least once per month and on a needs basis)
 - Perform security updates
 - Perform periodic backup of all data (database, Java code OS.); saved data will be stored on external memory provided by UMEFP. In case of failure, data will be 100% restored from the last (most recent) existing backup
 - Perform risk assessment for the RMIS
 - Offer technical support by phone and email for the UMEFP team
 - Offer consultancy and support to UMEFP in case of unexpected situations
 - Offer support to UMEFP staff for extracting reports to be used in other applications.
- *Development Activities (on request):*
 - JAVA code development for modules: financial management; monitoring and evaluation, reporting and auditing - within 5 days per month;
 - JAVA code development for modules: procurement - within 5 days per month;
 - Provide inputs to the documentation for the RMIS core corresponding to the new functionalities. The RMIS core includes financial management, procurement, monitoring and evaluation, reporting and auditing - within 5 days per month.
- *Have regular meetings with UMEFP Director and other relevant team members* in order to prepare, develop and coordinate all the activities required to fulfill the tasks envisaged. The progress of the services will be closely analyzed, highlighting issues and constraints that may impact the delivery of the RMIS maintenance and development.

- *Prepare a work plan for the proposed tasks* and submit it to Information System Specialist and Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist in the UMPFE, for analysis and approval.
- *Provide e-mail support to the RMIS users* for introducing data and utilization of RMIS, including for producing different types of reports

The Consultant will make all reasonable efforts to repair all software errors and ensure all required functionalities.

All the documents and information referred to this contract are considered confidential; the consultant will not disclose any information related to the contract.

The Consultant will work at his office premises, but in case of special requirement, he may work at the client’s premises or any client designated location.

4. Deliverables

As a result of the services described above, the Consultant shall deliver the following:

Deliverables	Delivery date/ Deadline
Periodical reports for the support & maintenance performed	5 days after the end of the month for which the report was elaborated
JAVA source code (with comments/ documentation) for the development of the RMIS modules: financial management; monitoring and evaluation, reporting and auditing, procurement	5 days after the end of the month, as an attachment to the monthly report for the month in which the respective development entered production
Inputs to the comprehensive documentation for the RMIS core: administration guidelines, user’ manuals, tutorials for the developments performed.	5 days after the end of the month, as an attachment to the monthly report for the month in which the respective development entered production

All reports/documentation will be prepared in Romanian language.

5. Qualification

The minimum competencies required from the Consultant are the following:

- Bachelor/Master degree or equivalent in Computer Science or related field;
- experience with development, implementation or administration/ maintenance of complex IT systems;
- experience with JAVA development.
- knowledge of database development, testing, integration and administration methodologies;
- Ability to deliver under tight deadlines and produce high quality outputs;
- Experience in documenting and managing issues and actions for administration / maintenance of information systems;
- Demonstrate strong interpersonal skills and good written and oral communication skills;

6. Other Relevant Terms

Period of the Assignment. This assignment is planned between June 2020 and December 2022.

Reporting. The Consultant should report to the Project Director, and will closely work with the Technical Coordinator, Financial Management Specialist, Grant Officers, Information System Specialist and Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist in the UMPFE.

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 program codes and relevant documentation such as diagrams, models, and databases compiled or prepared by the Consultant for the MER/UMEFPP in the course of the proposed assignment shall be confidential and become and remain the absolute property of the MER. The Consultant shall, not later than upon termination or expiration of the Contract to be prepared for the proposed assignment, deliver all such program codes and documents to the UMEFP.

Equipment and Software for Development of the RMIS. The Consultant should use his/her own equipment to carry out the tasks proposed in this Terms of Reference.