

27.02.2017, Bucharest

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

ROMANIA

Romania Secondary Education Project

Loan Agreement No 8481-RO

Assignment Title: *Designing the Terms of Reference for Developing Impact Evaluation of the Grant Schemes and Local Studies for Analysis of Demand-Side Programs*

Reference No.: C 3/10

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 *Designing the Terms of Reference for Developing Impact Evaluation of the Grant Schemes and Local Studies for Analysis of Demand-Side Programs* within a period of 60 days. The Terms of Reference for *Designing the Terms of Reference for Developing Impact Evaluation of the Grant Schemes and Local Studies for Analysis of Demand-Side Programs* 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. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services

Qualification

The minimum competencies required are the following:

- i. Advanced degree in education sciences/social sciences or a related field;
- ii. Extensive knowledge of Romanian education system and national policies;
- iii. Previous experience in design and implementation of monitoring and evaluation system/activities/ evaluation of impact of projects/programs;

- iv. At least 10 years of professional experience related to education field or pedagogical /project monitoring and evaluation experience related to educational projects financed by World Bank or European Union;
- v. At least 10 years of professional experience related to preparation and/or implementation of education development projects (experience in implementing World Bank financed projects is an advantage);
- vi. Ability to deliver under tight deadlines and produce high quality outputs;
- vii. Demonstrate strong interpersonal skills and good written and oral communication skills in English.

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 8:30 A.M. – 4:30 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 **13 March 2017, 16:30 local time**. To validate the information presented in the CV, the candidate will attach all supporting , 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)
Loan Agreement N° 8481-RO

Terms of Reference
for Designing the Terms of Reference for Developing *Impact Evaluation of the*
Grant Schemes and Local Studies for Analysis of Demand-Side Programs

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 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 the transition from upper secondary into 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 on the Baccalaureate.

Sub-component 1.1 – School-based Interventions. This sub-component supports the transition of students from upper secondary into 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 upper secondary graduation rate. Grants will be awarded to public high schools for a 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, it is estimated that approximately 80 percent of Romanian public high schools would benefit from this sub-component.

High school grants are intended to support activities that reduce high school dropout rates, increase graduation rates, and improve performance on the Baccalaureate. Eligible activities will include the following:

- Academic and support interventions (e.g. remedial classes, tutoring, counseling, coaching, mediation with Roma communities, etc.) – at least 50% of the grant amount;
- Extracurricular interventions (e.g. outreach programs, documentary trips/visits, internships, competitions, school networking, etc.) – up to 30% of the grant amount;
- Minor civil works for renovation of internal spaces/rooms (e.g. laboratories) with minimal or no adverse environmental impacts, and purchase of goods – up to 20% of the grant amount.

Up to 10 percent of each grant can also be used to cover grant management and incremental operating costs associated with grant management tasks, including salaries of grant implementation team members.

The high school grant scheme is due to start in the 2nd quarter of 2017 and will be phased in over *three batches* so as to allow for the MoNE to build in an effective learning curve and have sufficient time to make adjustments to the grants scheme, if required. Accordingly, during spring 2017, the first batch of approximately 25 percent of the eligible high schools (around 300) will be provided with a grant, with the second batch of around 754 eligible high schools participating in this scheme as of September 2017, and the third batch of around 100 high schools as of 2018. Each batch of approved proposals will be implemented over a period of 4 years (2017-2021 for the first and second batch and 2018-2022 for the third batch). This sub-component will also finance all the technical assistance required for establishing a quality assurance mechanism for the High Schools Grants Scheme (HSGS) along all the steps in the cycle, including: (i) preparation of guidelines; (ii) facilitation for the preparation of high school proposals; (iii) evaluation of grant proposals; (iv) mentorship for remedial pedagogical-related activities; and (v) monitoring of fiduciary and other pedagogical aspects during the implementation of the approved grants.

The applicant high schools will be assisted in preparing the grant proposals by a team of *facilitators*, who will operate locally, at the county level, each of them being in charge with providing assistance to about 20 eligible high schools. The facilitators will also evaluate the applications for grants, each of them evaluating the proposals submitted by other high schools, from different school inspectorate(s) than the schools facilitated by them.

Once the grant agreements with the high schools are signed, a team of *monitors* will provide on-site monitoring of the grants under implementation, to ensure that all activities are being implemented according to the approved proposal, that the reporting is carried out accordingly, that the social participation and citizen engagements, as associated to the implementation of the grant, are being carried out.

In-depth technical assistance and mentorship for the activities under grants will also be provided through *mentors*, in matters concerning the design and implementation of all pedagogical-related interventions addressing the issues for which the grant was requested.

A High Schools Grants Manual will inform participating high schools about the preparation and evaluation of grant proposals, will inform high schools of the implementation process for approved proposals, procurement procedures, financial management, and procedures for monitoring and collecting information on both the physical and financial implementation progress.

A series of guidelines for the High Schools Grants Scheme will be provided as instruments to facilitate the application and implementation of pedagogical activities, as:

- a) Guidelines on personal development and coaching;
- b) Guidelines on remedial activities and tutoring;
- c) Guidelines on counseling and professional guidance;
- d) Guidelines on socio-emotional skills development,
- e) Guidelines on inclusive education.

Both the High Schools Grants Manual and the guidelines related to the eligible pedagogical activities will be developed to be used by the UMEFP, the applicant high school team, the technical assistance as mentioned above (facilitators, monitors and mentors) and other relevant stakeholders.

Sub-component 1.2 – Systemic Interventions. This sub-component finances: (i) revision of the upper secondary education curriculum, with specific consideration for the needs of disadvantaged students including Roma; (ii) training of teachers and public school directors on implementing the revised curriculum, on adapting the curriculum to the needs and abilities of different students (inclusive education), student-centered teaching approaches, intercultural competence and on formative assessment; (iii) improving teaching conditions within Teachers Houses; (iv) revising and updating Grade 8 and Bacalaureate exam banks of items, and providing training and improvement of existing information and technologies platform; (v) development and implementation of a Grade 10 learning assessment, to be administered at the end of the compulsory education cycle; (vi) development of digital teaching and learning materials; (vii) development and implementation of campaigns to raise student and teacher awareness, which could be tailored for Roma students; and (viii) strengthening of MESR's capacity to use educational information to monitor upper secondary education and the transition of students into tertiary education.

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 universities that serve these at-risk students. In addition to the grants, this component finances technical assistance for evaluation of proposals and grants implementation monitoring. Approximately 85 percent of Romanian public faculties would benefit from this component.

This Component will also finance all the technical assistance required for establishing a quality assurance mechanism for the Higher Education Grant Scheme along all the steps in the cycle, including: (i) evaluation of grant proposals; and (ii) monitoring of fiduciary and other pedagogical aspects during the implementation of the approved grants.

Non-competitive grants aim at encouraging eligible public faculties to implement remedial programs, tutoring, counseling, guidance and support services, coaching services, workshops in specific areas, and awareness raising campaigns targeted to at-risk student to achieve the specific Project Development Objectives. The implementation period of these grants would be for 3 years.

Competitive grants aim at supporting tertiary-level campus-based summer courses (*summer bridge programs*) for public high school at-risk students to be offered on campus. The summer bridge courses would be offered during summer breaks and last between two to three-weeks. These courses would be offered to up to 25 public upper secondary education students per course and will fund student allowances and related course-delivery expenses. These courses would provide students an early and low-consequence university experience (“university knowledge”), developing familiarity of the context and initiating early skills development relevant to success in tertiary education. Faculties could present more than one summer bridge proposal.

Learning centers, also funded under the competitive grant scheme, aim at increasing the academic and social support mechanisms available to at-risk students. Each learning center would be designed based on the main factors contributing to student under-achievement and dropout from the earliest years of university, including under-preparation in upper secondary education, underdeveloped study skills, limited exposure to new academic subjects, and lack of familiarity with pedagogical norms (class size, duration, homework levels, and the like) at the university level. These centers would be fully-realized learning spaces, for directed support and self-learning, with furniture (including desks, tables for collaborative work, chairs and bookshelves) and technical equipment, such as computers, interactive white boards, and teaching/learning software (e.g. for language instruction, mathematics, writing, and other core skills, as well as for remedial support and assessment). The learning centers would require full-time administrative staff, paid or volunteer tutors and support staff, and would benefit from the contributions of professors or experts who would be compensated for supplementary work through the Project.

Public faculties would have autonomy to choose eligible activities, including but not limited to remedial programs, tutoring, counseling, guidance and support services, coaching services, workshops in specific areas, and awareness raising campaigns. Accordingly, eligible categories of expenditures could include: consulting services, non-consulting services, and incremental operating costs (including the management of the grant, excluding utilities, not to exceed 10 percent of the amount of the grant).

Participating public tertiary education institutions in both grant schemes – competitive and non-competitive - will receive a proposal preparation template, guidelines for the preparation, presentation, and evaluation of proposals, as well as the implementation, fiduciary, and monitoring aspects of approved grants. These guidelines together comprise the *Universities Grants Manual*.

The Universities Grants Manual will inform the participating tertiary education institutions about the steps to prepare and present proposal for both kinds of grants schemes, as well as the evaluation criteria and processes envisioned to approve or reject proposals. Furthermore, it will also describe the implementation process for approved proposals, procurement procedures and disbursement of funds and collection of supporting physical and financial implementation progress information. The Universities Grants Manual will be available in a printed format, as well as on-line.

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. This component also finances the carrying out of: (i) surveys concerning high school students attending bridge programs; (ii) an impact evaluation of the high school grants program to assess improvements in student outcomes and school management processes; (iii) a revision of the existing student loan scheme developed for tertiary education students; (iv) an analysis of existing demand-side programs addressing the needs of disadvantaged upper secondary students that are currently under implementation; and (v) other M&E studies, as needed.

In terms of monitoring and evaluation studies, the component 3 will finance the evaluation/assessment studies concerning:

- (i) The impact of the high schools non-competitive grants;
- (ii) The impact of the tertiary institutions competitive and non-competitive

- grants;
- (iii) The analysis of existing demand side-programs including: (1) the Money for High School Program (managed by the MoNE); and (2) other various demand-side programs, such as transportation subsidy programs, cash and in-kind schemes, complimentary assistance schemes with education attendance conditionality (managed by MoNE, other Ministries, and local authorities); and
 - (iv) The revision of the existing student loan scheme.

2. Objective

The objective of this assignment is to provide support to the ROSE Project Management Unit with project monitoring and evaluation studies, specifically with the preparation of terms of references (ToRs) for these studies and selection of consultants to carry them out.

3. Scope of Services

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

- *Learning tasks:*
 - Review the ROSE Project documents including the Project Appraisal Document (PAD), Loan Agreement No 8481-RO and Project Operations Manual (POM);
 - Review the *High School Grants Manual*;
 - Review the *Universities Grants Manual*;
 - Review the Guidelines on personal development and coaching, Guidelines on socio-emotional skills development, Guidelines on remedial activities and tutoring, Guidelines on counseling and professional guidance, Guidelines on inclusive education.
- *Meet the core ROSE Project Management Unit*, especially the Project Director and the Technical Coordinator.

Prepare a draft version of the ToRs for developing evaluation of the grant schemes, including impact evaluation of the High Schools Grants Scheme in English, taking into consideration all requirements presented in the POM/PAD. The document will specify the most important sections the study has to include, including at least the following sections: context, objective, scope of services, deliverables, qualification, other relevant terms (period, location, reporting, confidentiality, proprietary rights). The section devoted to the scope of services should include a relevant description of all tasks that the company to be hired has to fulfill, like, in the case of impact evaluation of HSGS: (i) the variables to be observed and the frequency of observation; (ii) the regular data collection process; (iii) the baseline and follow-up surveys; (iv) the monitoring methodology, like for example, through either classroom observations, or surveys or administration of assessment instruments; (v) the analysis to be performed on the data collected; (vi) the periodic reports to be prepared by the Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist of the UMEFP on the preliminary and final findings of these studies and observations as well as on the update of the Project's Results Framework; and (vii) the dissemination of these findings to be discussed at the highest levels of the MoNE for informed policy-decision making processes. The

draft version will be presented to the Project Director All comments provided to the Consultant should be incorporated in the final version of this document.

- *Prepare the final version of the ToRs for developing evaluation of the grant schemes, including impact evaluation of the High Schools Grants Scheme.* All comments provided to the Consultant should be incorporated in the final version of the above-mentioned document.
- *Prepare a draft version of the ToRs for developing local studies for analysis of demand-side programs,* in English, taking into consideration all requirements presented in the POM. The document will contain at least the following sections: context, objective, scope of services, deliverables, qualification, other relevant terms (period, location, reporting, confidentiality, proprietary rights). The section devoted to the scope of services should include a relevant description of all tasks that the company to be hired has to fulfill, will include a minimal list of demand –side programs to be analyzed and the characteristics to be taken into account in the analysis (program design, costs, eligibility requirements, targeting, program management etc.). The ToRs elaborated will underline the need for the local studies for analysis of demand-side programs to be highly articulated aiming at assessing how demand-side schemes all fit together. Based on the findings of the analysis, these studies will also present recommendations on increasing the integration, efficiency and effectiveness of such programs, including alternative solutions and possible changes/improvements of the existing programs. The draft version will be presented to the Project Director, who will review this with the Technical Coordinator. All comments provided to the Consultant should be incorporated in the final version of this document.
- *Prepare the final version of the ToRs for developing local studies for analysis of demand-side programs.* All comments provided to the Consultant should be incorporated in the final version of the above-mentioned document.
- *The consultant will provide assistance to the UMEFP in accommodating the comments provided by the World Bank team, if any, in order to obtain the “no objection”.*
- *The consultant will participate at the evaluation in the bidding process for the selection of companies that will develop the evaluation of the grant schemes, including impact evaluation of the High Schools Grants Scheme, respectively the local studies for analysis of demand-side programs;*
- *Communicate proactively and regularly with the Project Director and the Technical Coordinator.*

4. Deliverables

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

Deliverable	Due Date (in weeks following contract signing)
Draft version of the ToRs for developing evaluation of the grant schemes, including impact evaluation of the High Schools Grants Scheme	2 weeks

Final version of the ToRs for developing <i>evaluation of the grant schemes, including impact evaluation of the High Schools Grants Scheme</i>	4 weeks
Draft version of the ToRs for developing <i>local studies for analysis of demand-side programs</i>	6 weeks
Final version of the ToRs for developing <i>local studies for analysis of demand-side programs</i>	8 weeks
Templates for evaluation of the bidding documents	Established according to the bidding calendar
Technical reports regarding the evaluation <i>for the selection of companies that will develop the evaluation of the grant schemes, including impact evaluation of the High Schools Grants Scheme, respectively the local studies for analysis of demand-side programs</i>	Established according to the bidding calendar

All deliverables will be elaborated in English. Translation in Romanian will be subject to a separate contract to be established by the UMEFP.

5. Qualification

The minimum competencies required from the Consultant are the following:

- i. Advanced degree in education sciences/social sciences or a related field;
- ii. Extensive knowledge of Romanian education system and national policies;
- iii. Previous experience in design and implementation of monitoring and evaluation system/activities/ evaluation of impact of projects/programs;
- iv. At least 10 years of professional experience related to education field or pedagogical /project monitoring and evaluation experience related to educational projects financed by World Bank or European Union;
- v. At least 10 years of professional experience related to preparation and/or implementation of education development projects (experience in implementing World Bank financed projects is an advantage);
- vi. Ability to deliver under tight deadlines and produce high quality outputs;
- vii. Demonstrate strong interpersonal skills and good written and oral communication skills in English.

6. Other Relevant Terms

Period of the Assignment. The assignment is planned for up to 60 days between March 2017 and May 2018, with the possibility to be extended, if needed, based on positive assessment of the performance of the Consultant.

Location of Assignment. The Consultant will be based in Bucharest. The Consultant will be located in his/her office. He/ She will also participate in regular meetings with the UMEFP staff, at the UMEFP office.

Reporting. The Consultant should report to the Project Director.

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 in the course of the proposed assignment shall be confidential and become and remain the absolute property of the MoNE. The Consultant shall, not later than upon termination or expiration of the Contract to be prepared for the proposed assignment, deliver all such documentation to the MoNE.