

Bucharest
20.09.2017

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

ROMANIA

Romania Secondary Education Project

Loan Agreement No 8481-RO

Assignment Title: Technical Assistance to Support the Design of the National Curriculum for High Schools

Reference No.: C 1.2/1.1.2

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 *Technical Assistance to Support the Design of the National Curriculum for High Schools* within a period of 100 days, between September 2017 and March 2018. The Terms of Reference for *Technical Assistance to Support the Design of the National Curriculum for High Schools* 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) Advanced graduate degree (PHD/master degree/other postgraduate studies) in education sciences or pedagogy;
- (ii) At least 10 years of experience in curriculum development;
- (iii) International experience in curriculum development especially in upper secondary education is an advantage;

- (iv) Experience in development or implementation of inclusive practices in curriculum will be an advantage;
- (v) Academic track record/publications on the topics of curriculum development in particular in upper secondary, including VET;
- (vi) Previous experience in the area of curriculum development for secondary level in relevant projects in Romanian or other Eastern Europe education system will be an advantage;
- (vii) Proven ability to deliver under tight deadlines and produce high quality outputs;
- (viii) Strong interpersonal skills and excellent 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 8:00 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 29, 2017, 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.).

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

**Terms of Reference for Consultant to Support
the Design of the National Curriculum for High Schools**

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 (MNE) 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 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 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 graduation rate of the last years of high schools. 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 (1,082) would benefit from this sub-component.

Sub-component 1.2 – Systemic Interventions finances interventions at the level of the entire pre-university education system related to: (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 Baccalaureate 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 MNE's capacity to use

educational information to monitor upper secondary education and the transition of students into tertiary education.

This sub-component would finance technical assistance for the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) and the National Center for Development of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCDTVET) to revise the curriculum for upper secondary education from a subject-based to a competence-based model, including the revision of the teaching plans for high schools and more than 430 syllabi of general subjects or specialty subjects/modules for grades 9 to 12 in all three tracks of Romanian high schools. This process will be conducted in alignment with the curricular revisions for grades 1-8, which have been approved during school year 2016-2017.

In close relationship with the curriculum revision, the ROSE project funds will be used to finance training and professional development programs for teachers and public school directors of Romanian high schools, focusing on pedagogical techniques aligned with the competence-based approach, student-centered teaching that shifts the focus from teachers to learners, inclusive education and intercultural competence.

Component 2 – University - Level Interventions and Bridge Programs 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 finances day-to-day project management activities, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) activities and studies, an analysis of existing demand-side programs, project audits, as well as incremental operational and staffing costs of the MNE's UMEFP.

II. Objective

The objective of this assignment is to provide technical assistance to the Romanian decision-making bodies in curriculum, in particular the Ministry of National Education, the Institute of Education Sciences and the National Center for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development, in the process of **development of the new national curriculum for upper secondary level, in particular in the area of curriculum framework and subject syllabi development.**

III. Scope of Services

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

- a. **Learning Tasks:**
 - Review the ROSE Project documents including the Project Appraisal Document, Loan Agreement No 8481-RO and, if necessary, other documents as indicated by the Project Director.
- b. **Meet the core members of the ROSE Project Management Unit**, especially the Project Director, the Technical Coordinator, and the Upper Secondary Education

Specialist for Systemic Interventions, as well as other specialists in the UMEFP as indicated by the Project Director.

- c. ***Meet and collaborate with the representatives of the Institute for Educational Sciences***, especially the Director General, the Deputy Director, and the head of the Curriculum Laboratory, as well as with ***relevant representatives of the National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development (NCTVETD)***.
- d. ***Prepare a desk review of the legislative framework and regulations in force regarding organization of the upper secondary level in Romania*** with possible impact on the curriculum development (duration and levels of the pre-university education system, rules for admission to high schools and vocational education and training, learning pathways/ tracks in high schools and flexibility across and within educational pathways, final exam and certification in high schools, links with tertiary education level) and ***a set of recommendations*** for possible modifications that could foster better learning opportunities and improved education outcomes.

The draft of the report should be presented to the ROSE Project Director, and all comments provided to the Consultant should be incorporated in the final version of the document.

- e. ***Prepare a report which undertakes the analysis of the national curriculum development process in Romania*** - historical overview of the previous and current developments - frameworks, approaches, actors, institutions involved, processes - and the recent curriculum products and other regulatory correlated documents: curriculum policy document and other strategic documents, curriculum frameworks, subject curricula/syllabi for primary and lower secondary level. The analysis will have as a general objective to reveal opportunities for improving learning and learning outcomes of students offered by the curriculum regulatory documents, based on European key competences, and improve formative evaluation system. It will include the strong and weak points of the national curriculum, existing and possible strategies to adjust curriculum to the needs and abilities of different students, as a foundation for an inclusive system of education.

The analysis will address the assumed educational aims and upper secondary school graduates profiles and possible improvements in the documents, but also in the structure of the education system, length of upper secondary studies, balance between general education and specialty subjects, balance between core curriculum and school based curriculum, and the necessary conditions for implementation.

Special attention will be given to the provisions in the national curriculum regarding assessment of learning outcomes and specific relationship with formative assessment as well as with certification exams and national examinations, including conditions to access tertiary education level.

The consultant will also explore other transversal topics such as (but not limited to): school-based curriculum; cross and trans curricular developments; development of socio-emotional skills, building resilience through curriculum; ICT tools in curriculum development etc.

The report mentioned above will include a set of recommendations on necessary interventions on the curriculum documents to assure the vertical and horizontal coherence of all documents, consistency inside and across curricular areas and the intended shift towards a more comprehensive cross-curricular vision. These

recommendations will include **feedback** on the detailed work plan elaborated by MNE and IES for the development of the new national curriculum for high schools and a **special chapter** related to coherence between curricular documents and provisions on assessment of students' learning and learning outcomes.

The draft of the report should be presented to the ROSE Project Director, and all comments provided to the Consultant should be incorporated in the final version of the document.

- f. ***Provide inputs to the curriculum framework, the theoretical/ conceptual foundation (Presentation note) of the syllabi for different subjects and other documents (such as the syllabus for the different subjects, the most important changes proposed in the syllabus of different subjects, methodological notes etc.) developed by the working groups and IES for the new curriculum for high schools.*** The Consultant would be expected to review and contribute, including through participation to the meetings of the working groups, to the design and revision of the curriculum framework and other foundation documents prepared by the working groups, IES and, if applicable, by NCTVETD, having in mind the competence-based approach in curriculum and assessment and the need for specific consideration of the diversity of students' needs, including disadvantaged students. The feedback to the documents will be given as written notes and will give special attention to the vertical and horizontal coherence of all curricular documents, consistency inside and across curricular areas, considering shift from a content-based towards a more comprehensive cross-curricular vision.

The draft of all the reports should be presented to the ROSE Project Director, and all comments provided to the Consultant should be incorporated in the final version of the documents.

- g. ***Develop guidelines for curriculum developers*** (both for curriculum framework and the subject curricula), based on the findings of the prepared reports and a **needs analysis** for all the key actors in curriculum development.

The draft of the guidelines should be presented to the ROSE Project Director, and all comments provided to the Consultant should be incorporated in the final version of the documents.

- h. ***Coordinate with the other consultant/consultants*** contracted by UMEFP in the field of curriculum and, if necessary, in the field of learning outcomes assessment, in order to ensure coherence and consistency of their approach and make sure that their activities and deliverables complement each other.
- i. ***Provide online and face to face coaching sessions for the working groups in charge for designing the framework curriculum and for the coordinators of the working groups in charge with subject curricula development; the sessions will be based on specific questions and interests of the working group members.***
The consultant will participate in meetings with at least 10 working groups for curriculum development and national commissions for different subjects, as needed, in order to ensure good understanding and common vision on curriculum development.
- j. ***Draft the Framework guidelines for teachers to implement the new curriculum.*** The Consultant is expected to develop a framework document to be used for the guidelines for teachers to implement the new curriculum. The IES and, as required, NCTVETD will adapt this framework to develop the guidelines for different subjects.

- k. *Communicate proactively and regularly with the ROSE Project Director and his/her core team and participate in meetings, as needed.*

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 Romanian/English.

Deliverable	Due Date (in weeks following contract signing)
Draft <i>Report: Analysis of the national curriculum development process in Romania; recommendations for improvement of the curriculum documents</i>	6 weeks
Training materials for the <i>coaching sessions for the working groups in charge with designing the framework curriculum.</i>	8 weeks
Final <i>Report: Analysis of the national curriculum development process in Romania; recommendations for improvement the curricular documents</i>	10 weeks
Input (short notes) to the curricular documents prepared for the revised high schools' curriculum	According to calendar for curriculum development
Draft <i>Guidelines for the curriculum developers</i>	12 weeks
Final <i>Guidelines for the curriculum developers</i>	14 weeks
Training materials for the 10 <i>online and face to face coaching sessions for the working groups for the coordinators of the working groups in charge with subject curriculum development</i>	16 weeks
<i>Coaching sessions for the working groups for the coordinators of the working groups in charge with subject curriculum development</i>	According to calendar for curricular development
Draft <i>Desk review of the legislative framework and regulations in force regarding organization of the upper secondary level in Romania and improvement recommendations</i>	25 weeks
Final <i>Desk review of the legislative framework and regulations in force regarding organization of the upper secondary level in Romania and improvement recommendations</i>	28 weeks

V. Qualifications

The following qualifications are required for the proposed appointment:

- Advanced graduate degree (PHD/master degree/other postgraduate studies) in education sciences or pedagogy;
- At least 10 years of experience in curriculum development;
- International experience in curriculum development especially in upper secondary education is an advantage;
- Experience in development or implementation of inclusive practices in curriculum will be an advantage;

- Academic track record/publications on the topics of curriculum development in particular in upper secondary, including VET
- Previous experience in the area of curriculum development for secondary level in relevant projects in Romanian or other Eastern Europe education system will be an advantage;
- Proven ability to deliver under tight deadlines and produce high quality outputs;
- Strong interpersonal skills and excellent written and oral communication skills in English.

VI. Other Relevant Terms

Period of the Assignment. The assignment is planned for up to 100 days between September 2017 and March 2018, with the possibility to be extended, if needed, based on positive assessment of the performance of the Consultant.

Reporting Obligations. The Consultant shall report to the ROSE Project Director. All deliverables shall be submitted to the ROSE 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 MNE and World Bank in the course of the proposed assignment shall be confidential. The MNE 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 MNE.