

31 October 2016, Bucharest

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

ROMANIA

Romania Secondary Education Project

Loan Agreement No 8481-RO

Assignment Title: Development of Guidelines on Inclusive Education

Reference No.: C 1.1/1.3

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 *Development of Guidelines on Inclusive Education* within a period of *60 days*. The Terms of Reference for *Development of Guidelines on Inclusive Education* are annexed to this Request for Expressions of Interest.

The *Ministry of National Education and Scientific 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.

Qualification

The minimum competencies required from the Consultant are the following:

- i. Graduate degree or post graduate degree (PH.D./master degree/other postgraduate studies) in any field;
- ii. At least 10 years of professional experience in education;
- iii. At least 3 years of professional experience in inclusive education or in educational projects related to inclusive education;
- iv. Extensive knowledge of Romanian education system and national policies/legislation related to inclusive education;
- v. Previous professional experience in designing guidelines or in teacher training related to inclusive education;
- 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 Romanian.

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 **15 November 2016**. 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.).

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

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

Terms of Reference
for Development of Guidelines on Inclusive Education

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 and Scientific Research of Romania (MNESR) until November 2022. 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, dropout 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 (1,154) 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.

This sub-component will also finance all the technical assistance required for establishing a quality assurance mechanism for the High School Grants Scheme 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 primarily operate at the county level. Each facilitator will be 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: (i) that all activities are being implemented according to the approved high school improvement plan, (ii) that the reporting is carried out accordingly, and (iii) that there is evidence of social participation and citizen engagement in connection with grant implementation.

In-depth technical assistance and mentorship for pedagogical 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 School 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 will be provided as instruments to facilitate the implementation of the 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 Grant 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 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 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 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.

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 MNESR'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.

2. Objective

The objective of this assignment is to **develop the Guidelines on inclusive education** for the pedagogical activities under the high-school grant scheme (sub-component 1.1).

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, Loan Agreement No 8481-RO and Project Operations Manual.
 - Review the *High School Grants Manual*.
 - *Relevant documentation on inclusive education in Romania.*
- *Meet the core ROSE Project Management Unit*, especially the Project Director, the Technical Coordinator, the Upper Secondary Specialist, the Senior Grant Officer and the Grant Expert.
- *Prepare an outline of the **Guidelines on inclusive education***. The outline will be presented in a draft version to the Project Director, who will review this document with the core team mentioned above. All comments provided to the Consultant should be incorporated in the final version of the document.

The Guidelines will be focused on the main issues related to inclusive education, in terms of concepts, principles, policies, strategies and practices in inclusive schools. The content will be structured at least on three dimensions: (i) legislation, principles, and policies to promote inclusive education; (ii) strategies and practices to promote an inclusive culture at the classroom, school, and community levels; (iii) common barriers in learning and *inclusive teaching and assessment methods* to support learning for all students. The guidelines will include information regarding general themes, such as: criteria to define disadvantaged students (social, economic, cultural etc.), impact of disadvantage on access to and quality of education, discrimination/nondiscrimination, but also specific themes related to inclusion of Roma students in education and mediation in Roma communities, gender equity and gender discrimination and impact on learning, inclusion/exclusion of students with special needs, as well as different pedagogical approaches for supporting students with specific learning needs.

The Guidelines will include practical examples of administrative and organizational solutions to promote an inclusive culture, meant to induce learning and adapt teaching to the specific needs of different students.

Examples, good practices and suggested practical activities will be proposed for the grants' beneficiaries to implement at the high-school level.

- *Prepare a draft version of the above-mentioned Guidelines*. All comments provided to the Consultant should be incorporated in the final version of the above-mentioned Guidelines.
- *Prepare the final version of the **Guidelines on inclusive education***.
- *Communicate proactively and regularly with the Project Director and the core team of the UMEFP staff for the high school grant scheme.*

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)
Outline of the Guidelines on inclusive education	2 weeks
Draft version of the Guidelines on inclusive education	8 weeks
Final version of the Guidelines on inclusive education	14 weeks

All deliverables will be elaborated in Romanian. Translation in English 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. Graduate degree or post graduate degree (PH.D./master degree/other postgraduate studies) in any field;
- ii. At least 10 years of professional experience in education;
- iii. At least 3 years of professional experience in inclusive education or in educational projects related to inclusive education
- iv. Extensive knowledge of Romanian education system and national policies/legislation related to inclusive education;
- v. Previous professional experience in designing guidelines or in teacher training related to inclusive education;
- 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 Romanian.

6. Other Relevant Terms

Period of the Assignment. The assignment is planned for 60 days between November 2016 and March 2017, 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 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 MNESR in the course of the proposed assignment shall be confidential and become and remain the absolute property of the MNESR. 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 MNESR.