



**THE ORGANISATION OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES COMMISSION  
EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT UNIT  
EARLY LEARNERS PROGRAMME**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**CONSULTANCY SERVICES  
FOR**

**INDEPENDENT EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE OECS EARLY READING  
ASSESSMENT (ERA) 2016 AND THE 2016 GRADE 2 NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS  
RELATED TO READING**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) has received funding from the U.S Agency for International Development (USAID) towards support for the OECS Early Learners Programme (ELP). The funding is to assist the OECS Ministries of Education to improve reading among early grade learners. This is consistent with the USAID Education Strategy 2011-2015, and specifically with Goal #1 which is to improve the reading skills of 100 million students. The ELP aims to contribute to the overall improvement in student learning at the end of the primary education cycle and the objective is to improve the reading achievement levels of all learners at the early primary level (Grade K to Grade 3) in the six (6) independent Member States of the OECS.

**BACKGROUND**

The OECS Education Sector Strategy (OESS) which was endorsed by the Council of Ministers of Education in May 2011 was accepted as the framework for educational development in Member States. With a vision of “Every Learner Succeeds,” the main purpose of the OESS is to guide the educational directions and priorities of Member States. One of the development themes of the Strategy relates to the need to improve the levels of literacy, numeracy and technology among all learners. Analyses of student performance in various national and regional examinations revealed poor performance in English and Mathematics with a declining trend in the latter. The analyses also highlighted the gender disparities in performance at all levels with male students at greater risk of lower achievement.

Poor performance in English Language and Mathematics continues to be an area of major challenge for educators and policy makers in the OECS. Concern about the low performances in the two

subjects relates to the belief that the ability to read, write and count is critical for academic achievement and success on the job. Of further concern is the large and growing number of students transitioning to secondary education without the prerequisite skills to succeed at that level. The ELP therefore seeks to address low performances and improve reading performance among early grade learners in the beneficiary states.

## **PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTANCY**

Student assessment is an important component of a comprehensive reading improvement programme in ELP implementation, of which the overall goal is to improve students' reading ability at the early grades of primary education. This component emphasises the value of using student assessment data in guiding the teaching and learning process. **A previous consultancy [Administration of the OECS Early Reading Assessment (ERA) 2016] sought to gather information on students' reading ability at the end of Grade 2 in order to determine activities to be undertaken under other components of the overall reading improvement programme.** This was designed to provide baseline data on students' pre-reading and reading performance in keeping with the following USAID performance indicator: *Proportion of students, who at the end of two years of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand Grade level texts with direct United States Government support.*

However, it has become necessary to undertake an in-depth analysis of the baseline student assessment, in the light of national assessments related to reading in the Member States where the baseline assessment was conducted.

## **SCOPE OF SERVICES AND DELIVERABLES**

The OECS Education Development Management Unit (EDMU) is seeking to engage a consultant to provide the services described below. In close collaboration with the OECS and the Ministries of Education (MOEs), the Consultant will evaluate the OECS Early Reading Assessment (ERA) 2016 and further, conduct a comparative analysis of that test and the Grade 2 national assessments related to reading utilized by participating ELP Member States in 2016. The main goal of this consultancy is to determine possible contributors to the disparities between the findings of the ERA 2016 and the Grade 2, 2016 national assessments related to reading.

Specifically, this work will entail:

1. An evaluation of the student assessment instrument used in the baseline study – ERA 2016 and the Grade 2, 2016 national assessment related to reading
2. An analysis of the data collected during the ERA 2016 pilot and baseline assessment
3. A comparison of the following related to the ERA 2016 and the said national assessments conducted in 2016:
  - a. The test objectives
  - b. Content
  - c. The structure and format
  - d. Data collection procedures
  - e. Procedures of analysis

- f. Processes involved
  - g. Issues of rigour (validity and reliability)
  - h. Identifying any other key factors or relevant variable(s) that may contribute to the disparities observed between the two assessments
4. Preparing a detailed report identifying the following:
    - a. Baseline data analysis procedures and findings, and conclusions about quality
    - b. Clearly outlined similarities and differences between the ERA 2016 and the national assessments related to reading conducted in 2016, considering a – h above
    - c. Recommendations, with justifications, regarding the ERA 2016 and future national assessments related to reading
  5. The facilitation of a regional consultation to review the draft report
  6. Preparation and presentation of the final report on the comparative analysis and a report on the regional consultation.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The assignment will involve:

- review of available literature;
- review of national assessments and policies;
- interviews with key stakeholders; and
- liaise with various institutions within the six OECS participating countries.

Specifically, the Consultant will seek to undertake the work through the following proposed methodology:

1. Document analysis of the ERA 2016 and the Grade 2, 2016 national assessments related to reading in the Six participating Member States;
2. Interviews with key personnel for in-depth information gathering regarding the process, procedures and issues in relation to the general administration of the assessments;
3. Contextualizing the conclusions about each assessment in literature on standards for reading assessment instrument development and administration;
4. An Analysis of information gathered from the document analysis, interviews and consultations and compile a report outlining the findings with proposed recommendations.

## **DURATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT**

The Assignment is expected to be undertaken within thirty (30) working days and is scheduled to be conducted from February - March 2018. The Consultant shall:

- (1) take all the necessary steps to ensure that the entrusted task is executed properly and on schedule in accordance with the established Terms of Reference;
- (2) undertake to perform the task in accordance with the Terms of Reference and according to internationally accepted standards.

The allocation of days per activity is to be agreed. Table 1 below provides an indicative time table for undertaking key activities described under the tasks to be accomplished.

**Table 1 Indicative Time Table**

Activity	Deliverables	No. of Days
<p><b>Phase One 1: Inception stage</b></p> <p>Description of the approaches and timelines proposed to prepare and deliver the scope of services outlined, prior to the commencement of the assignment.</p> <p>Consensus building meeting with key representatives of the Education Development Management Unit of the OECS Commission</p>	<p>Detailed Methodology and work plan and schedule</p>	
<p><b>Phase 2: Data gathering</b></p> <p>Document analysis</p> <p>Conduct interviews and discussions with various key stakeholders virtually</p> <p>Analyse data from pilot and baseline assessments</p> <p>Prepare a report based on the findings of the various data collection and analysis procedures</p>	<p>Draft Evaluation and Comparative Analysis Report</p>	
<p><b>Phase 3: Regional Virtual Validation Workshop</b></p> <p>Regional consultation with Chief Education Officers/Directors of Education</p>	<p>Validation of report</p> <p>Agreed next steps and timelines</p>	
<p><b>Phase 4: Submission of Final Reports</b></p>	<p>Report on regional consultation</p> <p>Final Comparative Analysis report</p>	
<p><b>TOTAL</b></p>		<p><b><u>Max. 30</u></b></p>

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

The Individual Consultant should possess a range of skills, experience, qualifications and demonstrated knowledge in the areas described in the scope of services above. The below will be required for the Consultancy:

### ***Qualification and Skill***

- A post graduate degree in Reading or Literacy with specific training in literacy assessment
- Training in conducting qualitative and quantitative research

### ***Experience***

- At least five years' experience in the development/ design, adaptation, administration and evaluation of literacy assessments
- At least five years' experience working with early grade reading programmes
- At least five years' experience training teachers to administer literacy assessments
- Knowledge of trends and developments in Reading Instruction in the early primary grades, particularly in relation to literacy assessment tools and procedures
- Managing, analysing and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data

The Consultant is expected to demonstrate experience working with principals, teachers and education administrators as well as demonstrate good knowledge of best practices in early childhood development. Experience in the Caribbean region and particularly the OECS by the Consultant will be considered an advantage.

### **Further, the Consultant is expected to demonstrate the following competencies:**

- Strong interpersonal, excellent presentation, oral and written communication skills.
- Ability to establish good working relationships with stakeholders in a sensitive environment.
- Problem solving, data analytical skills and interpretation.
- Computer literacy on database software, quantitative analysis packages such as SPSS or equivalent and Microsoft packages (MS Word, MS PowerPoint, MS Excel MS Project) is an asset.

## **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

The Consultant will be required to report to and be supervised by the Project Coordinator of the OECS ELP of the EDMU, who will be responsible for ensuring timely and quality deliverables. Deliverables will be monitored by the Head, EDMU and Reading Specialist and reviewed by the Project Management Team (PMT) of the ELP. The Consultant is expected to attend, in person, the meetings agreed with the EDMU and undertake any field visits necessary to achieve the deliverables of the consultancy. The ELP PMT will facilitate the Consultant to acquire the required information and documents for completion of activities described in the Scope of Services.

Reports to be delivered should reflect progress made against the scope of services, agreed work plan and deliverables, as well as any matters to be resolved and recommendations for improvement. All reports are to be presented to the Head of the OECS EDMU. All documentary deliverables should be presented in draft for review before final submission. One (1) hard copy plus an electronic copy of reports and documentation.

## **GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION OF EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST**

Individual Consultants are invited to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested Consultants must provide information on their capability and suitability to undertake the assignment.

Consultants interested in undertaking the prescribed Services are to email an Expression of Interest to include:

1. Information on the Consultant's qualifications to perform the services, experience and competence relevant to the assignment, including a Curriculum Vitae.
2. A concept note on the planned framework for undertaking the assignment and a breakdown of the number of days required for each task (*as per Table 1*).

Expressions of Interests submitted should not exceed 30 pages.

The Consultant shall bear all costs associated with the preparation and submission of his/her Expression of Interest.

The OECS is not bound to accept any Expression of Interest, and reserves the right to annul the selection process at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the Consultants.

An electronic copy of the Expressions of Interest should be submitted by **19<sup>th</sup> December, 2017**, addressed to:

OECS/USAID Early Learners Programme  
Attn: Head, Education Development Management Unit (EDMU)  
OECS Commission  
Frank Johnson Avenue, Morne Fortune  
P.O. Box 179, Castries, SAINT LUCIA  
Telephone: (758) 453-0669/456-0572 Fax: (758) 458-5079

**At the following email address:**

[oeclusaidelp@oeecs.int](mailto:oeclusaidelp@oeecs.int)

[copied to: procurement@oeecs.int](mailto:procurement@oeecs.int)

The email submissions should include the name and address of the Individual Consultant and shall be clearly marked in the subject line as "Expression of Interest – **Independent Evaluation and Analysis of the OECS Early Reading Assessment (ERA) 2016 and the 2016 Grade 2 National Assessments Related to Reading**"

An Individual Consultant will be selected in accordance with the Consultant's Qualifications (CQS) Selection Method as detailed in the procedures set out in the Procurement Manual of the OECS, dated November 2013 revised June 2017.

The criteria to evaluate the Expressions of Interest received in relation to this assignment will include:

- Technical competence in undertaking the assignment;
- Academic qualifications;
- Experience in undertaking similar assignments; and
- Planned framework submitted for undertaking the assignment.

The Expressions of Interest will be evaluated and the Individual Consultant with the most relevant experience, qualifications and technical competence will be selected and requested to submit a fee proposal, which will be the basis for negotiations leading to a contract.

It is expected that the services will be conducted from February – March 2018, in keeping with the terms outlined in the Reporting Requirements above.