

## TC Document

### I. Basic Information for TC

▪ Country/Region:	BRAZIL
▪ TC Name:	Development of a toolkit for assessment and digitalization of early literacy content.
▪ TC Number:	BR-T1518
▪ Team Leader/Members:	Duenas Herrera, Ximena (SCL/EDU) Team Leader; Avila, Krysia A (LEG/SGO); Blasco, Ivana (SCL/EDU); De Freitas Severino, Ligia (CSC/GBR); Emilio Laguillo (SCL/EDU); Mariana Teixeira (SCL/EDU); Moreno, Michelle Leonor (ITE/IPS); Roberta Felix (CSC/GBR) Leader; Avila, Krysia A (LEG/SGO); Blasco, Ivana (SCL/EDU); De Freitas Severino, Ligia (CSC/GBR); Emilio Laguillo (SCL/EDU); Mariana Teixeira (SCL/EDU); Moreno, Michelle Leonor (ITE/IPS); Roberta Felix (CSC/GBR) Leader; Avila, Krysia A (LEG/SGO); Blasco, Ivana (SCL/EDU); De Freitas Severino, Ligia (CSC/GBR); Emilio Laguillo (SCL/EDU); Mariana Teixeira (SCL/EDU); Moreno, Michelle Leonor (ITE/IPS); Roberta Felix (CSC/GBR)
▪ Taxonomy:	Client Support
▪ Operation Supported by the TC:	
▪ Date of TC Abstract authorization:	25 Feb 2022
▪ Beneficiary:	Conselho Nacional de Educação (CNE)
▪ Executing Agency and contact name:	Inter-American Development Bank
▪ Donors providing funding:	OC SDP Window 2 - Social Development(W2E)
▪ IDB Funding Requested:	US\$300,000.00
▪ Local counterpart funding, if any:	US\$0
▪ Disbursement period (which includes Execution period):	24 months
▪ Required start date:	08-15-2022
▪ Types of consultants:	Individuals; Firms
▪ Prepared by Unit:	SCL/EDU-Education
▪ Unit of Disbursement Responsibility:	CSC/GBR-Country Office Brazil
▪ TC included in Country Strategy (y/n):	Yes
▪ TC included in CPD (y/n):	No
▪ Alignment to the Update to the Institutional Strategy 2010-2020:	Social inclusion and equality; Productivity and innovation

### II. Objectives and Justification of the TC

- 2.1 Background. Lower outcomes in reading have lasting consequences in the academic performance of students. Early literacy is critical for academic success. A longitudinal study by Good, Simmons, and Smith (1998) shows that the gap between lower and higher performers in reading skills widens significantly over time. According to PIACC<sup>1</sup> outcomes, in the long term, low reading skills are associated with lower income, employability, community and political participation, self-confidence, and lower levels

<sup>1</sup> OECD's Survey of Adult Skills.

of health.

- 2.2 Among the reasons for low reading skills outcomes are poor teacher training, an unequal distribution of effective teachers, and a lack of resources based on reading sciences. For this reason, the Bank has developed the initiative "Let's All Learn to Read" (ATAL), in association with Colombian Luker Foundation, a program for teaching reading and initial writing within the framework of technical cooperation ATN/OC-14665-CO (CO-T1359). ATAL includes preschool, first, second, and third grade and remedial materials for elementary school, with student booklets, teacher guides, and classroom materials. Both the remediation program and the first-grade program were subjected to rigorous experimental evaluations. The remediation program showed significant improvements in a reading ability index, with an improvement of 0.35 standard deviations compared to the control group. Preliminary first grade results are also encouraging, with improvements in the reading ability index of 0.32 standard deviations (Álvarez et. al, 2019).
- 2.3 The results of ATAL, as well as the helpful reviews by teachers and students, led to an expansion in Colombia where the program went from benefiting 3,000 students in 42 schools in Manizales in 2018, to benefiting more than 15,000 students in 165 schools in 2019, also expanding to the cities of Bogotá, Barranquilla, and Cali. In 2019, the Program's expansion strategy was worked on with the Colombian Ministry of Education, to reach 375,000 students in 8,000 schools in the country.
- 2.4 Brazil stands out in LAC for having a national literacy policy that highlights the importance of this process in the initial years of primary education. Proof of this are the results in the Estudio Regional Comparativo y Explicativo (ERCE) 2019 tests where 57% of the students in the fourth year of primary school achieved the expected learning in the reading test<sup>2</sup>. Minister Milton Ribeiro expressed the following regarding the test results: "Our results in the 4th grade are among the best and we will improve even more, since literacy is one of the priorities of this administration." Despite this achievement, the same results show that four out of ten students in 4th grade are not literate, showing that there is still a way to go.
- 2.5 Furthermore, in 2019 the literacy vice-ministry was created giving more visibility to this topic. The first action of the vice-ministry was to design the PNA (National Literacy Policy) with the objective of raising the quality of literacy and reduce illiteracy throughout the Brazilian territory. Unfortunately, its implementation has been delayed because of the municipalities' shift of focus during schools' closures. After two years of school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic and no national evaluations that indicate students' performance, it is likely that students have suffered a setback in their reading learning process that will have long lasting consequences in their academic performance.
- 2.6 To support the Brazilian government in its objective of increasing the percentage of literate students at the appropriate age (end of 3rd grade of Ensino Fundamental 1),

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<sup>2</sup> Previous editions of the ERCE (Estudio Regional Comparativo y Explicativo) assessed third grade students, it is expected that if you use the same instrument (third grade reading assessment) in a higher grade, students will have better outcomes. National assessments have also changed, moving the literacy assessment from third to second grade affecting comparability.

at the request of the National Education Council (CNE), the IDB initially allocated resources from Improvement of Efficiency and Service Delivery of Education in Brazil in times of COVID19 (BR- T1447), for the adaptation of the Let's All Learn to Read program to Portuguese. During the process of adapting materials, it was identified that the program did not have a teacher training component or an evaluation instrument to measure students' progress, which are fundamental to offer educational systems a comprehensive program. That is why, at the beginning of 2022, we received a new request from the CNE to continue developing the components of the Let's all learn to read program portfolio with a view to responding effectively to the needs of the educational system.

- 2.7 Although both Colombia and Panamá have used the early grade reading assessment (EGRA) to provide a reliable and valid measure of skills that contribute to reading acquisition, but its application is expensive as it requires external raters, and it provides little feedback to teachers.
- 2.8 ATAL has already been implemented in Colombia and Panamá and because the teacher training component has not been developed, both countries have offered training programs based on ATAL's materials. In Brazil as part of the linguistic adaptation of the program, the objective is to design a hybrid course to train teachers on early literacy focusing on pedagogical aspects and using the *Vamos todos aprender a ler* (VTAL) program as an anchor.
- 2.9 Objective. The objective of the Technical Cooperation (TC) is to strengthen the VTAL program portfolio in Portuguese by i) developing a reading fluency and accuracy assessment instrument for students and, ii) creating a hybrid course for early literacy training for primary education teachers.
- 2.10 Strategic alignment. At the institutional level, the operation is in line with the Bank's prioritization of learning and school achievement at the primary and secondary levels, as established in the Social Policy Strategy for Equity and Productivity (document GN-2588-4). The operation is also aligned with the Second Update of the Institutional Strategy (IEU) 2020-2023 (document GN-2933-5) of the IDB Group, since it is related to the development challenges of social inclusion and equality and productivity and innovation when developing education models inclusive hybrid programs that are adapted to more vulnerable contexts and that reduce the learning gaps that have grown with the pandemic. The TC is also aligned with Vision 2025 in its strategic objective of promoting social progress through education quality improvement and skills development. This project also promotes the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), which is a priority within the Bank's Sector Framework Document for Early Childhood Education and Development (document GN-2708-5). In addition, the TC is aligned with the Framework Document of the Skills Development Sector (GN-3012-3), which promotes hybrid learning through teacher training through a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) and in person, the development and use of assessment platforms for the reading and writing process. The TC is consistent with the Skills Development Sector Framework (document GN-3012-3), specifically in lines of action 1, 2, and 4, as follows, respectively: 1) ensure access to employment opportunities relevant and high-quality learning by promoting initiatives that promote learning to read and write at an early stage; 2) reinforce the quality and relevance assurance mechanisms by providing learning recovery

mechanisms and; 4) Leverage the use of technology to expand equitable access to development opportunities and skills, and streamline skills development systems specifically geared toward teaching and learning, by focusing on adapting the program to have hybrid features and can be used in blended, distance and face-to-face learning. Additionally, the TC will also contribute to the following objectives of Ordinary Capital (document GN-2819-14) with OC SDP Window 2 - Social Development (W2E) (GN-2819-14): (i) strengthen the efforts of public institutions to be more effective and efficient in social programming, group targeting, and execution of social sector projects. Finally, this technical cooperation is aligned with the Bank's country strategy with Brazil 2019-2022 (GN-2973) since it promotes a sustainable growth and a more effective government through innovation and digital transformation.

### III. Description of activities/components and budget

- 3.1 **Component I:** Development of a Reading fluency and accuracy assessment instrument. TC resources will be used to support the CNE in the following activities: i) construction and calibration of an item bank to assess fluency and accuracy; ii) an assessment tool prototype to host the item bank; iii) development of a platform that allows the collection of data to evaluate fluency and accuracy; and iv) pilot with teachers a first version of an instrument that allows them to design strategies to improve their students' reading and writing performance with EDUBE, Haskins Laboratories and University of Connecticut (see ¶4.3 to 4.5). The expected outcome is an assessment tool that allows teachers to review its students' improvement based on fluency and accuracy.
- 3.2 **Component II:** Development of a hybrid course for literacy training for primary education teachers in Brazil. TC resources will be used for technical assistance to support the CNE in the following activities: i) course design to be hosted at BID Academy, teachers will be rewarded badges once they reach certain milestones, the requirement for teachers to build a portfolio, and the course will promote the creation of learning networks; ii) BID Academy will offer a pilot of two cohorts with the support of course facilitators; and iii) based on lessons learned and feedback from course participants, improve the course content. The expected outcome is a literacy training course hosted at BID Academy (see ¶4.6).
- 3.3 This TC has a total budget of US\$300,000 and will be financed by OC SDP Window 2 - Social Development (W2E).

#### Indicative Budget

Activity/Component	IDB/Fund Funding	Total Funding
Reading fluency and accuracy assessment instrument	US\$255,000.00	US\$255,000.00
Development of a hybrid course for literacy training	US\$45,000.00	US\$45,000.00
TOTAL	US\$300,000.00	US\$300,000.00

#### **IV. Executing agency and execution structure**

- 4.1 This TC will be executed by the IDB TC will be executed by the IDB as requested by the beneficiary and concurred by Brazil's liaison institution, the Secretariat for International Affairs (SAIN). Design, and coordination of this TC and its disbursement will be tasked to the IDB's Education Division (SCL/EDU), in accordance with the requirements established in the Bank's Policy for Technical Cooperation (GN-2470-2) and the Operational Guidelines for Technical Cooperation (OP-619-4). Disbursement will be tasked to the Brazil Country Office (CSC/CBR). Under the fiduciary and technical responsibility of SCL/EDU through the project leader in accordance with the provisions of the TC request letter from the government. CSC/CBR will act as UDR for consulting contracts. The Bank will work closely with the CNE to ensure direct dialogue and involvement of authorities and key actors in the system. This cooperation will strengthen the tools of the VTAL program, which has been adapted from Spanish, and with these two components the program will have an added value that will improve its implementation by teachers in their classrooms. This is in accordance with the provisions of Appendix 10 (Criteria Applied to Contracting by the Bank) of the Operational Guidelines for Technical Cooperation Products (document GN-2629-1), because the beneficiary and the Bank agree that contracting by the Bank would improve the independence of evaluations and the capacity for coordination.
- 4.2 The activities to be executed under this operation have been included in the Procurement Plan (Annex IV) and will be executed in accordance with the Bank's established procurement methods, namely: (a) Contracting of individual consultants, as established in the regulations Complementary Workforce (CW) (AM-650); (b) Hiring of consulting firms according to Policy for the Selection and Contracting of Consulting Firms for Bank-executed Operational Work (GN-2765-4) and Operational Guidelines for the Selection and Contracting of Consulting Firms in Bank Executed Operational Work (OP-1155-4); and (c) Hiring of logistics services and other non-consulting services, according to IDB Corporate Procurement Policy (GN-2303-28). Given the activities to be carried out, the Bank's previous work with other agencies on the subject of teaching early literacy and writing, direct contracting will be carried out and justified.
- 4.3 First, University of Connecticut's professor and researcher, Augusto Buchweitz who is also affiliated to Haskins Laboratories will be hired to i) perform data analysis, validation and technical revision of the collected data (recordings); ii) validate the technical revision of parameters for the test difficulty tiers; iii) hold meetings and technical support to EDUBE and Mindtrust; and iv) carry out statistical analyses required for the calibration of the items bank and Balanced Incomplete Block Design (BIBD)<sup>3</sup>. We will hire the University of Connecticut as Augusto is affiliated to the University. He is a renowned neuroscientist expert in early literacy who has carried out several research projects with the Bank on topics such as scanning brain images of adolescents in violent environments, validation of VTAL materials to Portuguese, evaluation of GraphoGame use in Brazil, and design of the data collection platform for fluency and accuracy assessment.
- 4.4 Second, Evidence-Based Education (EDUBE) LTDA for the item bank construction and adaptation. As identified in the background, two of Brazil's PNA (National Literacy Policy) objectives are raising the quality of literacy and reduce illiteracy throughout the Brazilian territory. Renan Sargiani (EDUBE's President) was part of the team that

designed the PNA. Given the firm's expertise in early literacy, the firm's president participation in the PNA design team and his profound knowledge of VTAL materials. EDUBE's contract represents a natural continuation of previous work carried out by the firm. The firm's recognized expertise in early literacy and continued professional liability of the same firm makes continuation with the initial consultant preferable to a new competition subject to satisfactory performance in the initial assignment.

- 4.5 Third, Mindtrust, the Connecticut based Teams as a Service (TaaS) platform to develop a platform-based fluency and accuracy assessment instrument. The digital solution to be developed by Mindtrust builds on the MVP they developed. The scope of this phase is to develop an instrument that allows data (recordings) collection by teachers in their classrooms, so EDUBE and Augusto Buchweitz analyze, calibrate and build the item bank. The platform is the medium to collect data, store and process it. This contract represents a natural continuation of previous work as the firm developed the assessment's instrument MVP last year resulting in a cost-efficient solution because their team already have invested development hours in the MVP.
- 4.6 Fourth, Lettera to facilitate Knowledge Management, helping the Virtual Classroom Team in the instructional design and the facilitation of the Portuguese-language course "Desenvolvimento Profissional de Professores: Vamos todos aprender a ler". The firm Lettera has previous experience in the design and facilitation of several courses hosted at BID Academy, Cidades para todos: Gênero e diversidade nos espaços urbanos; Norma de desempenho 2 sobre biodiversidade (espanhol) e Environmental and Social Performance Standard 2 (inglês); Inovação aberta; e MOOC Parcerias Público Privadas para o Desenvolvimento: Implementando Soluções.

## **V. Major issues**

- 5.1 There are no risks identified with this operation. The Bank, through SCL/EDU, has extensive experience in developing the topics requested by the Government of Brazil, in addition to maintaining a permanent dialogue both with local counterparts and organizations, as well as with local and international experts to obtain assistance. In the case of a possible recession in Brazil, the TC's implementation and sustainability is not at risk because no funding is needed for either.

## **VI. Exceptions to Bank policy**

- 6.1 None.

## **VII. Environmental and Social Strategy**

- 7.1 This TC is not intended to finance pre-feasibility or feasibility studies for specific investment projects or environmental and social studies associated with them; therefore, this TC does not have applicable requirements of the Bank's Environmental and Social Policy Framework (ESPF).

### **Required Annexes:**

[Request from the Client - BR-T1518](#)

[Results Matrix - BR-T1518](#)

[Terms of Reference - BR-T1518](#)

[Procurement Plan - BR-T1518](#)