

Terms of Reference for the engagement of

ICILS Research Analysts

as part of the 21st Century Schools programme – phase II implemented by the British Council in partnership with the Ministry of Education in Serbia

1. Background to the assignment

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. Its purpose is to build engagement and trust for the UK through the exchange of knowledge and ideas between people worldwide. It seeks to achieve its aims by working in education, science, governance, English and the arts. The British Council was established in 1934 and incorporated by Royal Charter in 1940. It is registered as a charity in England and Wales (charity no. 209131) and Scotland (charity no. SCO37733). It is also an executive non-departmental public body, with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as its sponsoring department. The primary charitable objectives of the British Council, as set out in the Charter, are as follows:

- Promote cultural relationships and the understanding of different cultures between people and peoples of the United Kingdom and other countries.
- Promote a wider knowledge of the United Kingdom.
- Develop a wider knowledge of the English language.
- Encourage cultural, scientific, technological and other educational co-operation between the United Kingdom and other countries.
- Otherwise promote the advancement of education.

The 21st Century Schools programme – phase two, builds on the recently completed 10 million GBP Western Balkan 21st Century Schools Programme funded by the UK Government and implemented by the British Council between October 2018 and May 2022 and the British Council Pilot Western Balkans 21st Century Schools programme for lower grade primary school teachers implemented from November 2021 to March 2022. This programme was designed to build on the two previously implemented programmes to respond to demand from WB Governments to ensure additional support, especially for scaling up the programme to lower grade primary school teachers, with the aim of enhancing critical thinking, problem solving (CTPS) and coding skills in children aged 6–10 through organising comprehensive CTPS and specific training for the newly established Digital World subject for lower-grade teachers and coding challenges with use of the micro:bit device. The programme in Serbia is implemented in a partnership between the British Council and the Ministry of Education.

ICILS study

Since its establishment in 2013, ICILS (International Computer and Information Literacy Study) international research provides comprehensive insights into how students interact with technology and develop essential digital skills.

ICILS 2023 encapsulates the broad use of computer technologies across various aspects of daily life – from schools and homes to communities and workplaces – and examines how students investigate, create, participate and communicate in digital environments. By doing so, ICILS 2023 provides a holistic view of students' digital competencies, going beyond mere technical skills to encompass critical thinking, problem-solving and effective communication in digital contexts.

With 35 education systems participating from all around the world, ICILS 2023 underscores its global relevance and importance. The study aligns closely with UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 4.4, which seek to increase the number of youths with relevant skills for employment.

This alignment ensures that ICILS 2023 not only provides valuable data but also contributes directly to global efforts to improve education and employability in the digital age.

ICILS 2023 is a novelty for the Serbian education system with more than 3,400 eighth grade students from 155 selected schools in Serbia included in this research.

The research in Serbia was conducted by the Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation in co-operation with IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) and ACER.

2. Overall objective

Improving the quality of primary education in Serbia by enhancing the critical thinking, problem solving and coding skills of elementary school students in Serbia.

3. Term

30 January 2025 – 31 March 2025; two consultants are expected to work up to 20 consultant days each.

4. Deliverables

Prepare individual comprehensive analysis reports summarising key findings and providing actionable recommendations based on ICILS data for 155 schools participating in the ICILS 2023.

Tasks and Results for the Project Assignment

- Analysis of the ICILS 2023 Database from the Perspective of School Reports
Examining the relevance and feasibility of conducting school-level analyses.
- Review of Available School Reports
Analysing reports from international assessments and the final exam at the end of the eighth grade.
- Development of the ICILS 2023 School Report Concept (Deliverable 1)
Defining the purpose, target audience, accessibility, type of data, content and format of the report.
- Designing the Data Presentation Format
Creating templates for data visualisation and representation within the ICILS 2023 school report.
- Creation of Customised Databases
Developing tailored datasets required for generating ICILS 2023 school reports.
- Data Processing for 155 Schools
Preparing and analysing data specific to the participating schools.
- Production of 155 ICILS 2023 School Reports (Deliverable 2)
Finalising and delivering individual reports for all 155 schools.

5. Approach for the assignment

Based on the data provided by the Institute for Advancement of Education and the findings of the published ICILS 2023 report, the consultants will conduct in-depth analysis of the ICILS findings and develop ICILS 2023 School Report Concept and produce individual reports for each participating school based on the guidelines from the Head of Education Technology Centre at the Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation and the British Council project team.

6. Experience required

- Minimum of three years of experience in educational research, policy analysis or data analysis, preferably within international education studies.
- Proven experience in research, data analysis and report writing, particularly in educational research or international studies.
- Familiarity with international assessments such as ICILS, PISA or TIMSS is highly desirable.
- Proficiency in statistical software (e.g., SPSS, R, Stata) and data visualisation tools (e.g., Tableau, Excel).
- Strong analytical skills and the ability to synthesise large datasets into coherent insights.
- Strong understanding of research methodologies, including both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Application process

Applicants are required to send in English:

- CV including references, full name, job title, company name, email address and telephone number.
- Cover letter (1 page) stating how they meet the qualifications and experience requirements.

To apply, please send your application to Stela.Durutovic@britishcouncil.org with the subject line 'Application for ICILS Research Analyst'.

The deadline for applications is **Monday 27 January 2025, 23.59 CET**.

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.