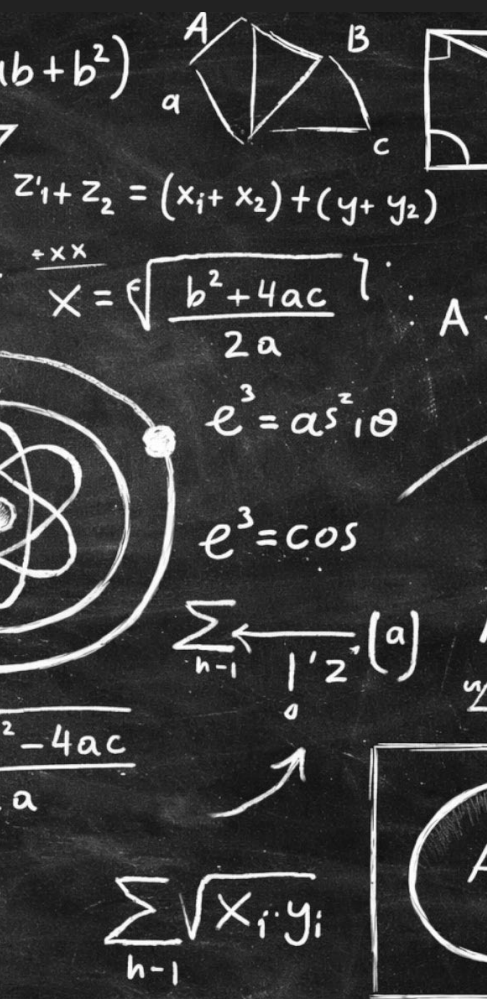




I-LAB X MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND MERIT

Improving the management of substitute teacher payments

DOS DESIGN

PEOPLE ABOUT CHANGE

Introduction

In 2025, the Ministry of Education and Merit (MIM), with the support of the State General Accounting Department (RGS), adopted the **i-lab program** to innovate and improve the management of payments for **short-term and occasional substitute teachers** (SBS).

The objective is to review and strengthen the entire management process, addressing existing critical issues and laying the groundwork for designing solutions that are sustainable from a regulatory, administrative, and technological standpoint.

Within the framework of inter-institutional collaboration, this marks the first time the i-lab program has been adopted by an administration outside its original context.

Multiple institutional stakeholders are involved around the same table:

- the Ministry of Education and Merit (MIM);
- the Ministry of Economy and Finance, including its DAG (Department for General Administration, Personnel and Services)/NoiPA, as well as the State General Accounting Department;
- the school system.

The program, with an estimated duration of four months, involves approximately **30 participants**, including team members, contributors, observers, and coordinators.

Context

The starting scenario is characterized by the complexity of the system **managing processes related to payments for short-term and occasional substitutes**. In 2025, several critical issues delay and disrupt the system.

This complexity is amplified by the autonomy of educational institutions, which leads to **heterogeneous operational practices across the country**, and by the **differing organizational needs of various school levels**, with significantly different management impacts between primary and secondary schools.

Payments for short-term and occasional substitutes are governed by the Prime Ministerial Decree of August 31, 2016, which defines timelines and procedures for managing employment relationships and related payments.

Implementation relies on cooperation between the information systems of the Ministry of Education and Merit and the Ministry of Economy and Finance—namely the Education Information System (SIDI) and NoiPA, the platform of the Department for General Administration, Personnel and Services—which share **data through a structured and widespread process** covering the entire national school system.

Problem

The challenge is **to resolve the organizational complexity** surrounding substitute teacher payments. The core issue lies in a system characterized by complex administrative steps.

Processes related to payments for short-term and occasional substitutes present several operational and managerial critical points that **slow down payment timelines** and generate bureaucratic inefficiencies.

These **issues** do not concern **payments alone** but extend to a range of related aspects, such as the **management of absences among teaching and administrative staff**, the **appointment and activation of substitute roles**, and the **cooperation between MIM and MEF systems**, which needs to become more fluid and consistent.

Opportunity

The opportunity stems from the **ongoing exchange of best practices developed over the years between RGS and other public administrations**, further strengthened by the co-design activities promoted through i-lab.

In this context, in response to MIM's need to innovate its payment management processes for SBS, RGS made the **i-lab program** available to the Directorate-General for School Infrastructure, Resources, and Institutional Support.

The adoption of the program by MIM is therefore part of a broader framework of inter-institutional exchange, in which i-lab is recognized as an effective methodological tool **to support process transformation and the design of digital solutions**.



Solution

The i-lab program makes it possible to better identify critical issues, formalize them, and map them into a shared process built collaboratively with all stakeholders involved.

A working group composed of actors from different areas of expertise and administrations ensures multiple perspectives on both challenges and opportunities.

The methodological framework follows the structure already established with i-lab 3.0 (previously adopted for another major RGS digital transformation program, InIt) and breaks down activities into **four phases**:

- **Preparation**: preliminary phases;
- **Idea / Validation**: definition of intervention hypotheses;
- **Experiment**: collection of additional external feedback on proposed solutions;
- **Closing**: final refinement and consolidation.

The activity focuses on the analysis of **two scenarios**:

- management of the employment relationship and contract;
- authorization and payment.

The management of the employment relationship and contract is structured into five phases and twenty-five steps, from reporting an absence to formalizing the substitute contract. **The second scenario**, organized into four phases and fourteen steps, focuses on calculating the compensation due for substitutes and issuing payments.

Overall, the analysis identified **68 critical issues** (39 in the first scenario and 29 in the second) and **51 improvement** opportunities (27 in the first and 24 in the second). Based on these findings, **65 solution principles** were defined to guide the subsequent resolution phase.

A single multidisciplinary team was established, bringing together all stakeholders to define shared requirements validated by the MIM business community.

The outcome of this work is a structured package of interventions, defined by MIM with the support of RGS, including **regulatory, administrative, and technical innovation measures**.

A solution developed in **six months**, made possible through the service design process led by DOS.

Change and impact

The intention is not only to address the issue of substitute teacher payments but **to improve the entire process**. The future system will ensure timely salaries and adequately staffed classrooms, delivering tangible benefits for the organization, people, and education.

The impacts include:

- **faster and more reliable payments** for substitute staff;
- **simplification of bureaucratic procedures** for schools and central administration;
- **greater operational efficiency** for central administration and more streamlined processes for all stakeholders involved;
- increased **transparency** in monitoring public expenditure.

An improvement that affects the entire system, not just a single component.

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